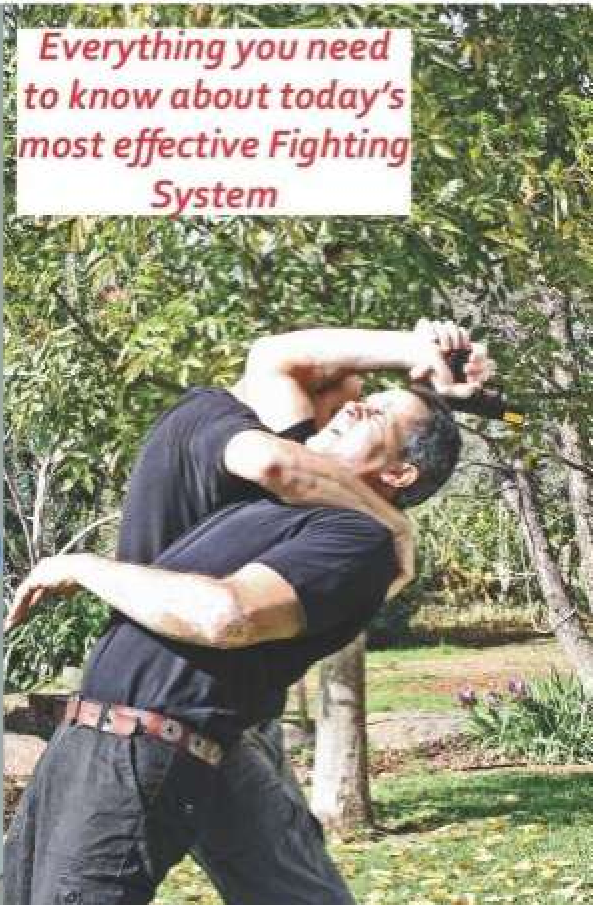
The Essential Book of
KRAV MAGA



Everything you need to know about today's most effective Fighting System

by Marc De Bremaeker

The Essential Book of KRAV MAGA

Tested in battle:
No-nonsense Self Defense techniques from today's most effective Fighting System

By

Marc De Bremaeker

Fons Sapientiae Publishing

The Essential Book of Krav Maga. Published in 2019 by *Fons Sapientiae Publishing*, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Please note that the publisher and author of this instructional book are NOT RESPONSIBLE in any manner whatsoever for any injury that may result from practicing the techniques and/or following the instructions given within. Physical and Martial Arts Training can be dangerous, -both to you and others-, if not practiced safely. If you are in doubt as how to proceed or whether your practice is safe, consult with an accredited coach, physical trainer, Krav Maga teacher or a trained Martial Art master before beginning. Since the physical activities described maybe too strenuous in nature for some readers, it is essential that a physician be consulted prior to any type of training.

Copyright © by Marc De Bremaeker
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without prior written permission from the author and/or the publisher.
martialartkicks@gmail.com

ISBN of the printed version: 978-0-9957952-8-0

Recommended reading, by the same author:
"Advanced Krav Maga" (2019*)*
"Krav Maga Kicks - Real-world Self-defense Techniques from Today's most effective Fighting System" (2017)
"Joint Kicks - Destruction of the Opponent's Limbs" (2018)
"Isoplex - Musculation Program for an Aesthetic and truly Athletic Body (2017)
"Sacrifice Kicks - Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Realistic Airborne Attacks (2016)
"Stealth Kicks - The Forgotten Art of Ghost Kicking" (2015)
"Ground Kicks-Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Goundfighting" (2015)
"Stop Kicks-Jamming, Obstructing, Stopping, Impaling, Cutting and Preemptive Kicks" (2014)
"Low kicks-Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Attacking the Lower Gates" (2013)
"Plyo-Flex-Plyometrics and Flexibility Training for Explosive Martial Arts Kicks" (2013)
"The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks" (2010) by Tuttle Publishing
"Le PLYO-FLEX" (2019) in French
"Les Coups de Pied au Sol" (2018) in French
"Les Coups de Pied d'Arret" (2017) in French
"Les Coups de Pied Bas" (2016) in French
"Le Grand Livre des Coups de Pied" (2019) by Budo Edition (In French)
"i Calci nelle Arti Marziali" (2015) by Edizioni Mediterranee (in Italian)

DEDICATION

This Volume is dedicated, again, to my beloved grandchildren

TRACK &
San D
ATHLETIC
Cali

Abigail, Elliot and Oliver

Dear Reader,

In this day and age, the life of a serious author has become quite difficult. The proliferation of books and the explosion of internet content has made it nearly impossible to promote work based on extensive research and requiring complex lay-out.
Please enjoy this book. Once you are finished, I would ask kindly that you take a few short minutes to give your honest opinion. An unbiased Amazon review, of even a few words only, would be highly appreciated and encouraging.

Thank You,

Marc

Good words are worth much and cost little.
~George Herbert

HEUN
AGA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the active support of my wife and life companion, ***Aviva Giveoni***, this book would not have come to life. Being an athlete in her own right, she understands the meaning of hard work and dedication.

Aviva

Sensei Shlomo Faige

Among many teachers and heads and shoulders above, my late Sensei, -***Sidney (Shlomo) Faige***-, should be mentioned with longing thankfulness. Sensei Faige founded the Shi-Heun style of Karate and Krav Maga.

Special Thanks to my life-long friend and training partner, ***Roy Faige***, for his help and support. Roy is now heading the Shi Heun school is also my co-author of *The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks*. His influence and advice is felt in nearly every page of this work and the previous books in the series, where he appears in many photos.

Roy and Marc

Thank you to ***Ziv Faige, Gil Faige, Shay Levy, Dotan De Bremaeker, Nimrod De Bremaeker, Eric Collet and Itay Leibovitch*** who helped by painstakingly posing for some of the photographs.

Most photographs have been taken by the author, by Roy Faige and by Aviva Giveoni. But special thanks have to be extended to my friend ***Yariv Gai*** and to talented ***Grace Wong*** for some shooting sessions. Thank you also to professional photographer ***Guli Cohen***: some of the photographs in this book have been extracted from the photo sessions he gracefully did for previous volumes.

The drawings in this book are mine. Everything that I have learned about line art, I have done so from professional Illustrator ***Shahar Navot***, who illustrated *The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks.* Thanks Shahar!

הבא להורגך השכם להורגו

"If someone comes to kill you, get up early to kill him first."
-Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 72:1

CONTENTS

Dedication 3
Acknowledgements 7
Disclaimer 10
General Foreword 12
Introduction to Krav Maga 14

Part One: The Vulnerable Points to target....................................18

Part Two: Victimology - The Theory of Aggression....................................33
  2.1 Awareness....................................34
  2.2 The Verbal Phase of an Aggression 35
  2.3 The Physical Phase of the Aggression 37
  2.4 Danger Detection....................................40

Part Three: Krav Maga Strikes 41
  3.1 The Headbutt....................................42
  3.2 The Shoulder Strike....................................44
  3.3 The Elbow Strikes....................................44
  3.4 The Knife-hand and Forearm Strikes....................................49
  3.5 The Punches....................................55
  3.6 The Palm Strikes....................................56
  3.7 The Eyes Attacks....................................60
  3.8 The Hammer-fist....................................68
  3.9 The Throat Attacks....................................72

Part Four: The Kicks of Krav Maga 78

Part Five: Applied Krav Maga Series 139
  5.1 General....................................140
  5.2 Offensive Series....................................142
  5.3 Defenses against Punches 149
  5.4 Defenses against Kicks 162
  5.5 Defenses against Grabs 188
  5.6 Defenses against Holds 204
  5.7 Defenses against Chokes 221

Part Six: More Offensive Techniques (Range Covering, Combinations, Guard Neutralization) 234
- 6.1 Range Covering Techniques....235
- 6.2 Guard Neutralization Techniques....239
- 6.3 Natural Combinations....243
- 6.4 Special Techniques....248

Part Seven: Defenses against Stick Attacks....267
- 7.1 The Stick....268
- 7.2 Preemption....269
- 7.3 Defense against a Downward Stick Strike....279
- 7.4 Defense against an Horizontal Inwards Stick Strike....289
- 7.5 Defense against a Backhand Stick Strike....291
- 7.6 Defenses against Baseball Bat Attacks....294

Part Eight: Defenses against Knife Attacks 300
- 8.1 The Knife....301
- 8.2 Training for Knife Defenses....302
- 8.3 Training Progression....303
- 8.4 Minimizing damage....306
- 8.5 Preemptive attacks against a knife-wielding attacker....308
- 8.6 Disarming Principles....312
- 8.7 Close proximity Knife Threats....314
- 8.8 Downward 'Icepick' Knife Attacks....327
- 8.9 Straight Pokes and Stabs....333
- 8.10 Slashes....345

Part Nine: Defenses against Gun Threats 357
- 9.1 Body evasion and Disarming....359
- 9.2 Threats from the Front....364
- 9.3 Threats from the Back....371
- 9.4 Threats from the Side....376
- 9.5 Long Gun Threats....378

Part Ten: Improvised Weapons....385

Afterword 398

CAUTION – ADDITIONAL DISCLAIMER

This special disclaimer comes in addition to, but not instead of, the general disclaimer presented on the first page of the book regarding the practice of Krav Maga and other physical activity.

Most techniques presented in this book are crippling and potentially lethal. They are designed to be used in real self-defense situations where life and physical integrity are threatened.
The Author and the Publisher decline all legal responsibility for the possible consequences of using these techniques in training and in real life situations. The reader and practitioner is solely responsible for keeping an ethical behavior and for remaining in the legal framework for self-defense of the jurisdiction in which he is at the moment of use of said techniques.

Utmost caution and restraint are required both in training and in a real aggression. Krav Maga techniques have been designed for survival in extreme situations and common sense is required by the trainee.

All this having been said, the Author thinks that life is sacred, starting with yours and that of your loved ones. All normative citizens, because of their observance of social graces, are often reacting too slowly to obvious aggressions by criminals. Common Sense should always trump political correctness, although with caution. But honest folks should remember that, in extreme circumstances, it is "*Better to be judged by Twelve than carried by Six*".

General Foreword

In 2017, we published a first book about Krav Maga in our 'Kicks' series. This "***Krav Maga Kicks***" was intended to explain the Krav Maga approach to kicking for self-defense, which is different than traditional Martial Arts and Sport. We presented the kicks used in Krav Maga and the way they should be executed. But the book did also present in detail the general Krav Maga principles, the sensitive points targeted by all strikes and kicks, the general offensive techniques used to preempt an attack and the basic self defense techniques against an unarmed assailant. All in all, it was our intention to give the 'Kicks' series a little peek of the world of modern no-nonsense survival fighting.

This treatise was very well received, but many reactions did indicate a need for a more complete presentation of Krav Maga. The need for more advanced techniques, the need for a description of the upper limbs strikes and the dealing with armed opponents were clearly missing for many readers. This was due to the limitations of being part of the 'Kicks' series, and certainly not done on purpose.

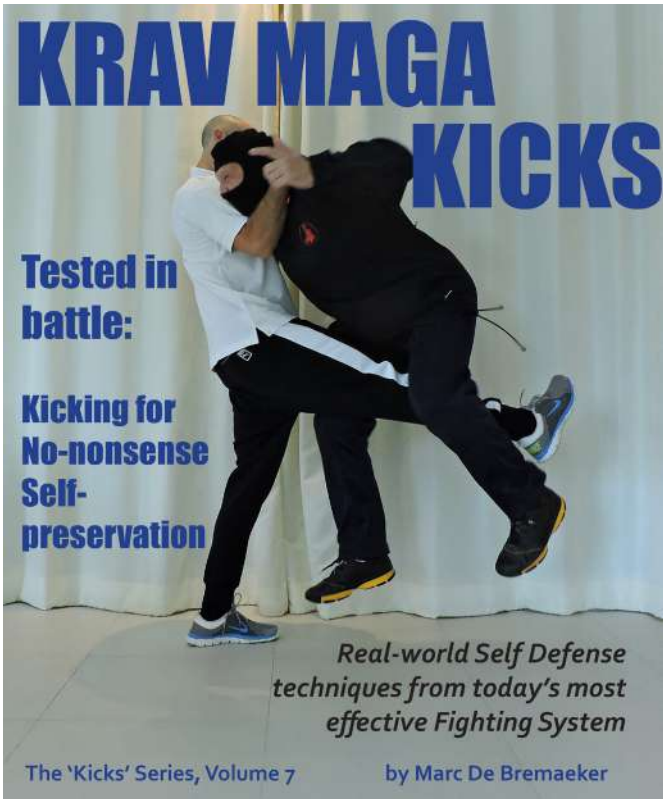
This is why we have completed this first work with "***Advanced Krav Maga****" in 2018*, and its contents answered the requests of most of the commenting readers. '*Advanced Krav Maga*' was not about overly sophisticated techniques! This would be contrary to the KISS principle ("Keep it simple, stupid"). It was complementary and about simple techniques against more complex and more dangerous armed attacks (needing more drilling to become natural). It also covered the Krav Maga strikes that were omitted in the previous book about kicks, and it included in more detail the range-covering techniques for a safe preemptive attack. The book concluded with a short Chapter about the use of everyday items as self-defense weapons. This book had been written as a complement to '*Krav Maga Kicks*', but it also needed to be able to stand alone as a Krav Maga treatise, independent from the successful 'Kicks' series. Therefore, we had to duplicate some of the data. We apologized to our faithful readers, but these duplicated parts, necessary for new readers, were kept to the minimum necessary to help the coherence of 'Advanced Krav Maga'.

And then came more comments…

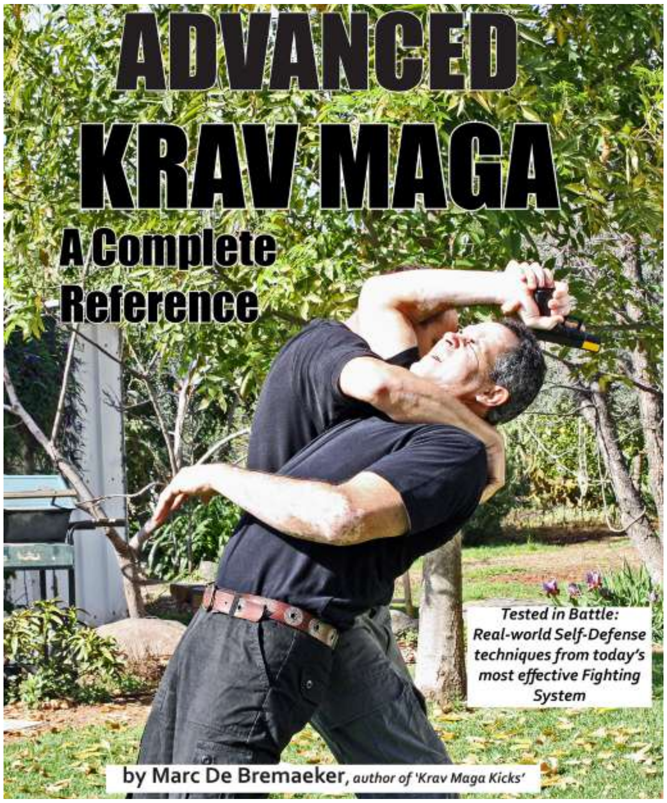
The new comments were about the the need for a coherent overview of Krav Maga that would cover everything relevant in a logical way, without splitting it in different parts.
The readers were basically asking for a single treatise including all the data from both our previous books. We cannot deny that there is logic in it and we endeavoured to prepare such a work.

"The Essential Book of Krav Maga" simply presents all the data from 'Krav Maga Kicks' and 'Advanced Krav Maga'. The contents are presented in a logical and coherent way, but there is no new data. We made sure to state it clearly on the back cover and to design a front cover that conveys the message. The owners of our 2 previous Krav Maga books will not find anything new here.

We can only hope that this new presentation will reach its goal: ***to concentrate in one go everything that is needed for the serious Krav Maga Artist to know***.
But remember that it is not the number of known thechniques that is important, but rather the incessant drilling of the few techniques that work best for you.


KRAV MAGA
KICKS
Tested in battle:
Kicking for No-nonsense Self-preservation
Real-world Self Defense techniques from today's most effective Fighting System
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 7
by Marc De Bremaeker

+


ADVANCED
KRAV MAGA
A Complete Reference
Tested in Battle: Real-world Self-Defense techniques from today's most effective Fighting System
by Marc De Bremaeker, author of 'Krav Maga Kicks'

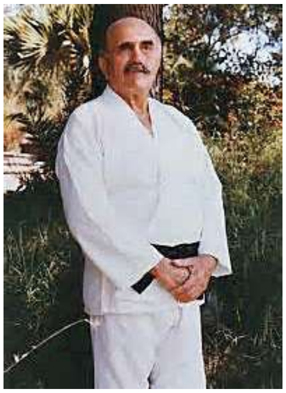
Introduction to Krav Maga

FOREWORD מבוא

Krav Maga (קרב מגע) is a Hebrew word meaning basically “Close Combat”. ‘Krav’ means combat or battle, and ‘Maga’ means contact in the sense of very close. Until its world fame as an effective Martial Art, the word was interchangeable with its previous generally accepted denomination: *Kapap* (קפ״פ). Kapap is the Hebrew acronym for: Krav Panim el Panim (קרב פנים אל פנים), which translates as ‘Face-to-face Combat’. Basically, it means the same thing: Close Combat.

Krav Maga and/or ***Kapap*** is a self-defense system developed for the ***Israel Defense Forces*** (צה״ל) that consists of techniques based on simplicity and gruesome efficacy, and drilled in very realistic training. It is renowned for its focus on real-world situations and its brutal counter-attacks. As a rule of thumb, it emphasizes fast threat neutralization, simultaneous blocking and countering and an always offensive mindset. *Krav Maga* used to be used mainly by the Israel Defense Forces’ special units, but it started to trickle down to regular army units, then to law enforcement and intelligence organizations, and finally, in a toned-down version, to the general public in Israel, and more recently internationally.

HISTORY היסטוריה



Imre Lichtenfeld (aka *Imi Sde-Or*) was born in 1910 in Budapest, Hungary and grew up in Bratislava (Slovakia). Lichtenfeld grew up to become a gifted wrestler and boxer. When, in the mid-1930s, anti-Semitic riots began to threaten the Jews of Bratislava, he became a street fighter and organized and trained Jewish young men to defend their neighborhoods against the growing numbers of Nazi and anti-Semitic hooligans. Finally, Lichtenfeld had no choice but to escape from Europe with his family in 1940.
Arrived in Palestine, he joined Israel’s “Haganah” (הגנה), a pre-state Jewish paramilitary organization protecting Jewish refugees from Arab marauders and also fighting for the establishment of a homeland for the persecuted Jewish people...

… It is then and there that Lichtenfeld met the *Kapap* training system already in place to teach Jewish refugees physical education, stick fighting and the rudiments of an evolving self defense system. Names associated with *Kapap* in the 'Haganah' and its special forces (called *Palmach*) were, among others: Gershon Kopler, Yitzhak Sadeh and Maishel Horovitz. In 1944, Lichtenfeld began training fighters in his areas of expertise: physical fitness, swimming, wrestling, boxing and both armed and unarmed street fighting. In 1948, when the State of Israel and the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) was founded, he became Chief Instructor for Physical Fitness and Close Combat (*Krav Maga*). He served in the IDF for about 20 years, during which time he developed and refined his unique method of hand-to-hand combat, based upon scientific principles and battle experience. The Middle East is a 'tough neighbourhood',to paraphrase former Chief of Staff Ehud Barak. It is therefore by necessity that the Martial Art of *Krav Maga* evolved into the most realistic for the 20th and 21st centuries.

Imi Lichtenfeld

The Art evolved through trial and error, and through cross-fertilization with the experience of numerous Jewish Martial Artists who came and immigrated to Israel in its formative years. These Artists and their students did all meet through the special units of the IDF and influenced one another for the betterment of Krav Maga. Among a few, one can name ***Sidney Faiga*** and ***Dennis Hannover*** who, in 1960, immigrated together from South Africa to settle in Moledet, Israel. *Sidney (Shlomo) Faiga* later founded the *Shi Heun School of Karate and Krav Maga*, and *Dennis Hannover* went on to found the *Hisardut* (Survival = הישרדות) Organization.

Dennis Hanover and Sidney Faiga

Sidney 'Shlomo' Faiga

The fights and growth of the young State of Israel were the fertile soil in which all these influences brought about the genesis of a new and fully practical Martial Art umbrella: ***Krav Maga.***

BASIC PRINCIPLES עקרונות בסיסיים

Although ***Krav Maga*** encourages civilian students to avoid confrontation, it promotes finishing a fight as quickly as possible if it becomes unavoidable. Attacks are always aimed at the most vulnerable parts of the body, and training promotes the deliberate causing severe injury. Drills provide maximum safety to students by the use of protective equipment and by emphasizing caution and power control. *Krav Maga* is about 'real world violence, which unfortunately is still too common. And the key principle behind it is **KISS** (Keep it simple, stupid!).

The other general basic principles of *Krav Mag*a are:

- ***Attacking preemptively*** or Counterattacking as early as possible. Take the initiative as soon as possible.
- ***Keeping an offensive attitude***. Project confidence and proficiency. Avoid retreating and keep the pressure *forward*.
- ***Targeting attacks to the body's most vulnerable points*** (eyes, neck, throat, nose, ears, solar plexus, groin, lower ribs, knee, foot, fingers,...).
- ***Maximizing efficiency*** for fast neutralization.
- ***Using an offensive Defense***: simultaneous attacking and blocking
- ***Maintaining constant awareness of the battlefield*** (assailant's accomplices, surroundings, escape routes, weapons or useful everyday objects)
- ***Retzev*** (רצף). This probably the most important tenet of Krav Maga. *Retzev* in Hebrew simply means: sequence or continuity. But the connotation of the word in modern Hebrew is very much about un-interruption, smooth continuity, no stopping in a sequence of different steps until finished. American Krav Maga has it translated as 'Continuous Motion', which is a fair image. The idea of 'Retzev' is pretty simple: after your first offensive move [preemptive attack/attack/offensive defense/counterattack] you keep striking with no interruption until the fight is over: no resting, no interruptions, no retreating for assessment. And ideally, you should vary the type of attacks (punches/strikes/kicks), the height of attacks (low/high/medium), and the angle of attacks (inside/outside/back) in order to better overwhelm the opponent. Just do not make the mistake of assuming that this is about speed first; it is not! It is about **continuity** and full-powered intelligent strikes. Speed is good if it does not impact the focused power of the chain of strikes. Applications in the text will make the concept clear.

The Late Sidney Shlomo Faiga in action

It is not because it is difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that it is difficult.
~Senecus

Part One

The Vulnerable Points to Target

נקודות התורפה

One of the main attributes of *Krav Maga* is the *exclusive targeting of vulnerable points.* This is a no-nonsense fighting system that is supposed to work in stressful situations. Unless you are a lifelong dedicated Martial Artist, hitting esoteric pressure points or striking the opponent randomly does not work. One must also bear in mind that in high adrenalin-state, feelings of pain are dulled and therefore an assailant's body can easily take much more punishment that you can imagine from your armchair.

By concentrating on a limited number of targets, *Krav Maga* makes the acquisition of good habits and effective techniques much simpler: you can drill the maneuvers many more times and you will basically often execute the same strikes in different '*Retzev*' all the time. These automatisms will serve you right when your body will be on autopilot in a stressful 'real world' situation.

Krav Maga is also not for the faint-hearted; it is a system developed for survival in warfare and in life-threatening situations. Survival trumps all social norms, and training is required for a normative citizen to acquire self-preserving reflexes that are not in line with his social education and background.

We will describe here the main **Vulnerable Points** to target in training (*carefully*) and in case of need (*at full power*). . They can be kicked, punched, palm-striked, elbowed, kneed, and even bitten if your survival depends on it…

If you find yourself in a fair fight, you didn't plan your mission properly.
~Colonel David Hackworth

1. FIRST LINE TARGETS

The First Line Targets that must be hit with priority whenever possible are:

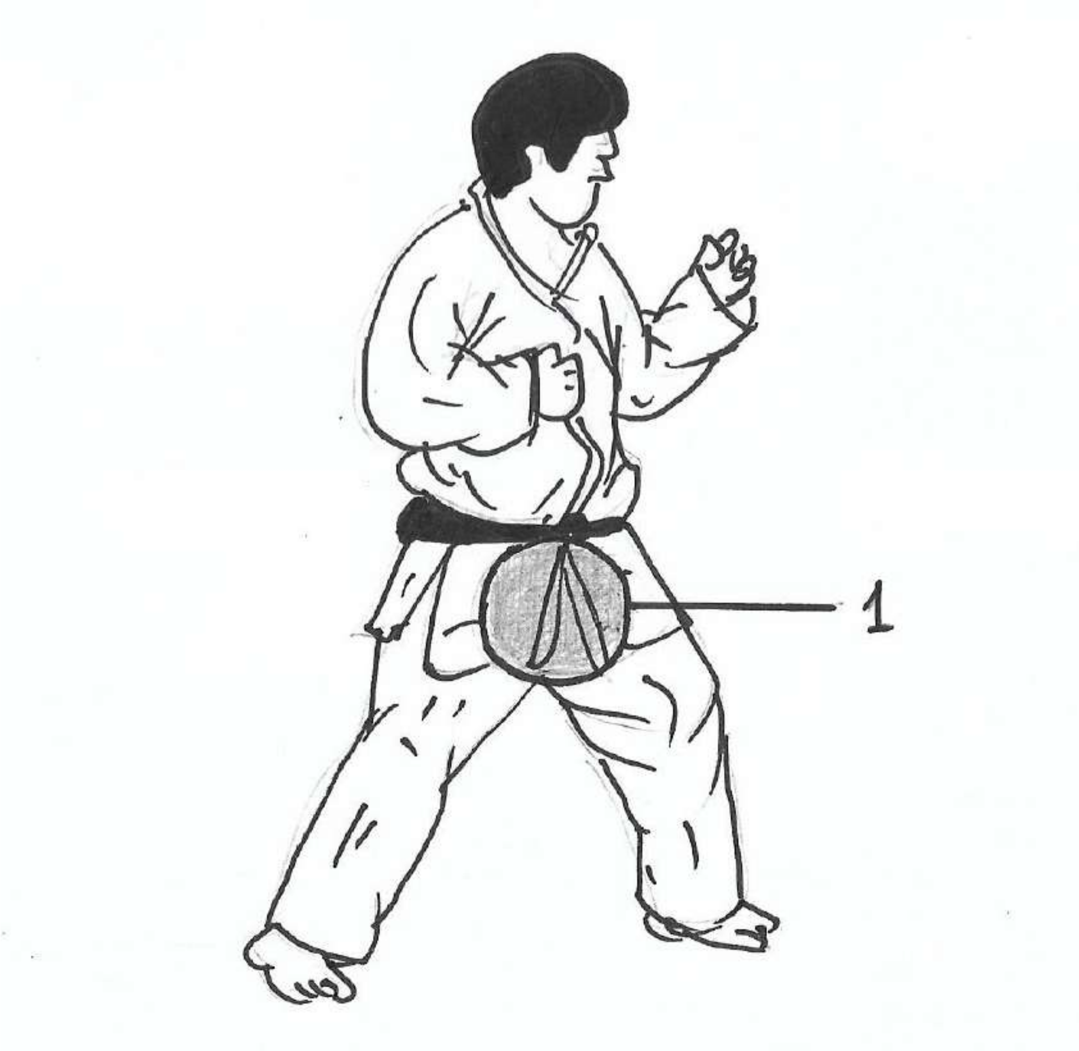
1. The Groin
2. The Groin
3. The Groin.

This pun is intended to underline the importance of the *testicles* and of the general *groin area* as a vulnerable point to strike in a survival situation.

I once had a Tai Jitsu instructor, very good but rather foul-mouthed, that used to say: "In real combat, you do not have an opponent, you have a floating pair of balls in front of you". This is a quote and I apologize for the language; but it expresses very clearly the state of mind required and the importance of making targeting the groin a second nature.

You can and should hit the groin from the front, from the back, with your feet, with your knees, with your palms, with your elbows, with your head; you can even try to grab them...

The testicles are an exception to the adrenalin-pumped pain theory: nearly everyone will experience excruciating pain when hit. The physical damage is also very serious. But this does not mean that you have to stop your '*Retzev*' after a successful groin strike. Remember that *Krav Maga* series do not stop until the opponent is fully neutralized; you may need to repeat the groin strike, follow with other strikes to sensitive targets, or destroy the assailant's joints to make sure the danger to you or your loved ones is over.



Krav Maga first line targets

2. SECOND LINE TARGETS

The Second Line Targets must be targeted when the groin is well protected, out of reach, or has already been hit, or has been feinted towards to elicit a reaction. *Second Line Targets* are crippling targets, but they still have always to be part of a 'Retzev' and followed up until complete victory.
Unlike in traditional Martial Arts, they are not pinpointed vulnerable points to be struck with precision and with specific natural weapons: They are general areas rich in such points! *Krav Maga* takes into account the stress of real life threats for normative people not used to violence. It would be difficult for them in such situations to react with pinpoint precision!

The Secondary Targets List reads as follows:

2.1 The Nose ('*Middle of the Face' Target*).
The ***nose*** is a great target: easy to find in the middle of the face, and very sensitive. When you hit someone's nose hard, you overload his senses: shock his sense of touch with the impact, blurr his vision with the watering of his eyes, disturb his ability to breathe through the nose, and make him smell and taste blood,… The preferred kicking weapons are the *knee* or the *top of the foot* when you have caused him to bend forward, and the *bottom of the foot* if he is already on the floor. The preferred punching weapons are the *fist* and the *palm of the hand*, although *elbows* and *head* butts are not to be sneezed at. The author tends to prefer the Palm to the Fist for *2 reasons*:

- it is safer to the fingers, especially in stressed situations where the fist is not necessarily well-rolled.
- it has the fingers visiting the area around the opponent's eyes, which is very disturbing to the attacked.

The nose is also a great target, because, being in the middle of the face, it lends itself to misses that are still good targets: the eyes and orbital bone, the cheekbones, the lips,… Of course, after scoring on the nose, you have to keep hitting until your assailant is fully subdued.

Head Butt to the nose

Knee Strike to the nose

2.2 The Throat (*Adam's Apple and the general Larynx area*).

Knuckle Strike to the throat

Striking the throat with the weapon seized from the attacker

The ***throat*** is not always easy to reach, but when possible, it is a crippling target, even to the extent of being lethal. This, of course, underlines the need for utmost caution in training and in actual 'real world' use. If your life is not in danger, you should avoid targeting the throat; this is not for stopping an inebriated acquaintance fooling around! A crushed larynx will cause breathing difficulty that can lead to asphyxiation and death. On the other hand, if your life is in danger from several real thugs or an armed mugger, you should use your *knuckles*, the *sword edge of your hand*, the *webbed part between your thumb and forefingers* or the *sword edge of your foot* to strike the throat. If you miss slightly, you are still in a sensitive target-rich environment: the chin, the carotids, the lips and the clavicles.

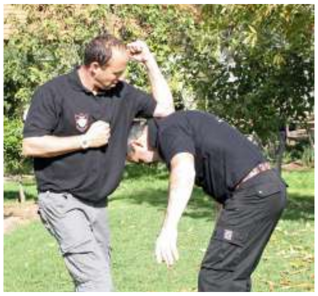
2.3 The Eyes (*and the Orbital Cavity Ridge*).

Fingers Poke to the eyes

The ***eyes*** are an obvious but often underused target. Poking the eyes is, of course, a very painful and crippling move that can cause blindness. Poking with the *straightened fingers* or *protruding knuckles* is a very serious and dangerous technique to be used only in life-threatening circumstances. But the eyes can also be attacked in serious but milder ways: you can punch or palm-strike the *general eye area* to damage the orbital cavity, or you can ***rake or whip-strike*** the eyes to cause an atavistic reaction that will include lifting the hands (and therefore uncover the primary target). The *Whipping Strike towards the eyes* is an extremely fast and effective technique to be used any time possible; it has milder consequences than a poke, but it as effective in the very short term needed. When you are going with a Punch or a Palm Strike for the general eye area, you are in a good neighborhood: should you miss, you still could hit the nose, the temple or the higher cheekbone.

2.4 The Back of the Neck (*Cervical vertebrae*).

The ***Back of the neck*** is a potentially crippling target that can even cause death. Be extremely careful in training and in real-life use. In the unfortunate life-preserving circumstances, it must be struck with a penetrating blow *that goes through*. The weapons used are the *knife of the hand*, the *elbow*, the *forearm*, and in the right set-up the *foot*. We cannot underline enough the seriousness of striking the cervical area: be wise and calculated.

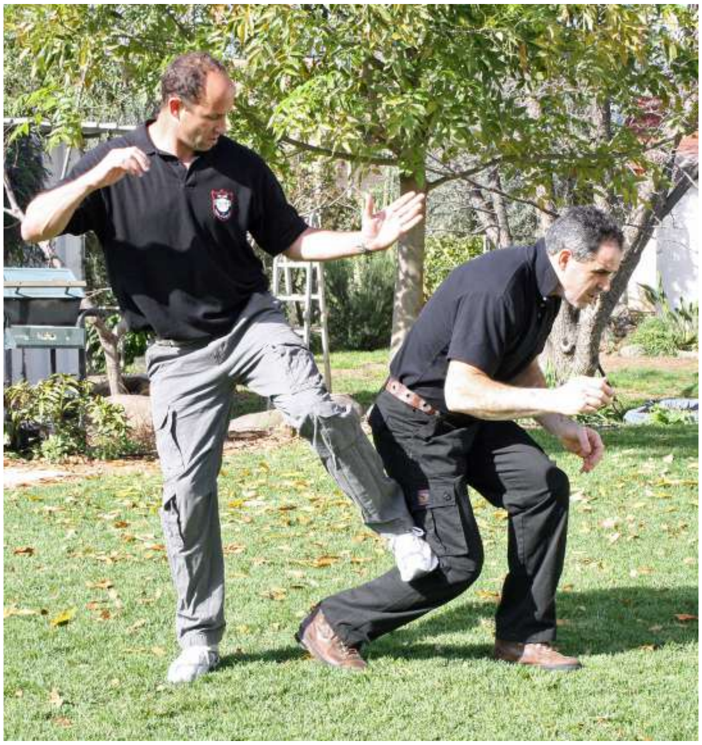


Elbow strike to the back of the neck

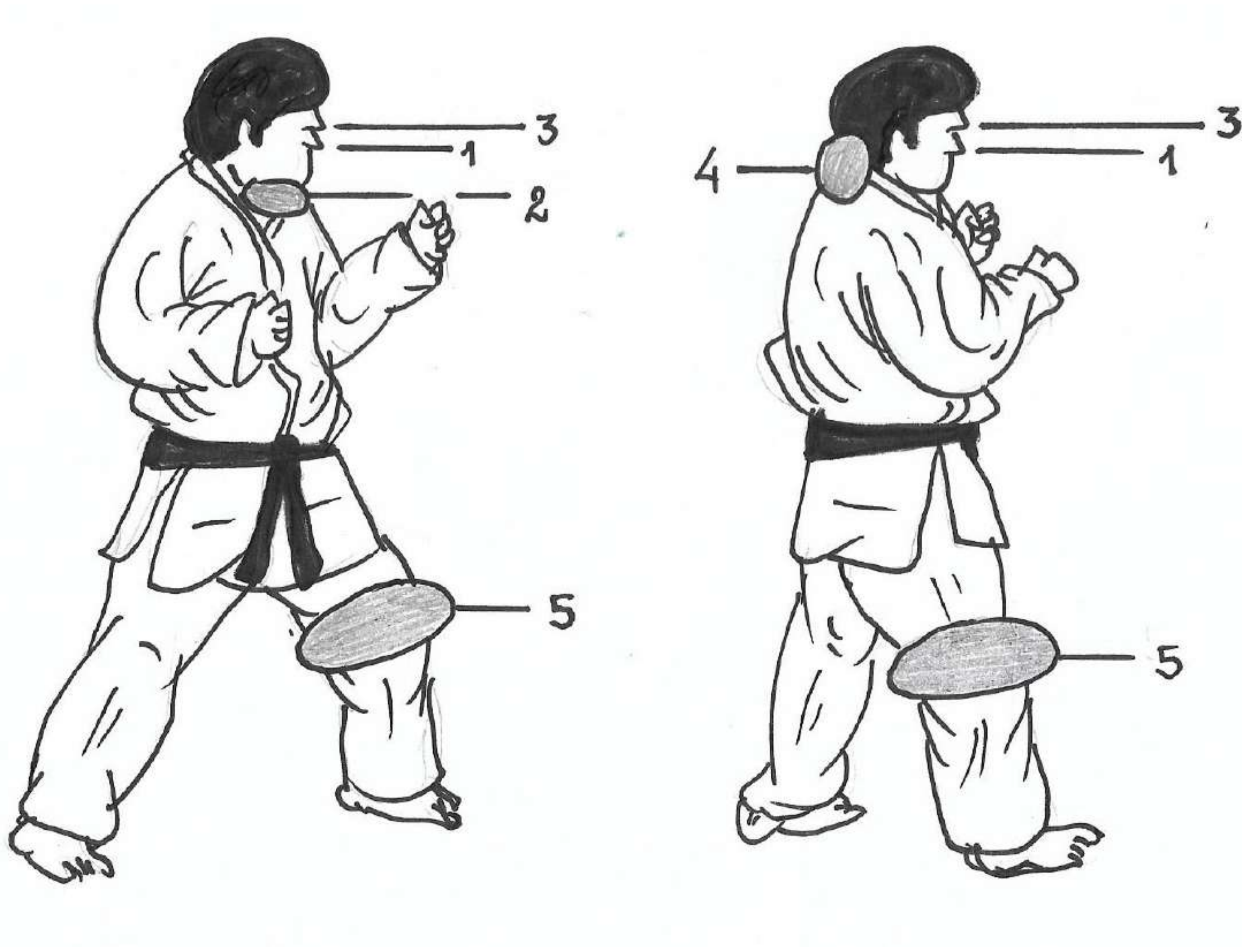
2.5 The Knees.

The ***knee*** is an important target: it is easy to reach, especially if your opponent has a high guard to protect his face or if you have provoked his lifting his hands, for example with a feint towards his eyes. The knee should be hit from any side possible: front, back and sides: it is a very sensitive joint. Most serious kicks will damage the knee, cause pain and hamper the assailant's mobility; their crippling potential should also be understood. The knee can be attacked with straight, circular and stomping Kicks; one has just to remember to kick *through* the target. No surface-slapping!

It is also important to target the knee with *precision*: the traditional 'Low Kick' (*Circular*) is usually delivered to the thigh; it hurts but it is a bad self-defense habit. Go for the knee with precision, because you want to destroy the ability of your attacker to move and to stand.



Stomping the knee



Krav Maga's Secondary Targets

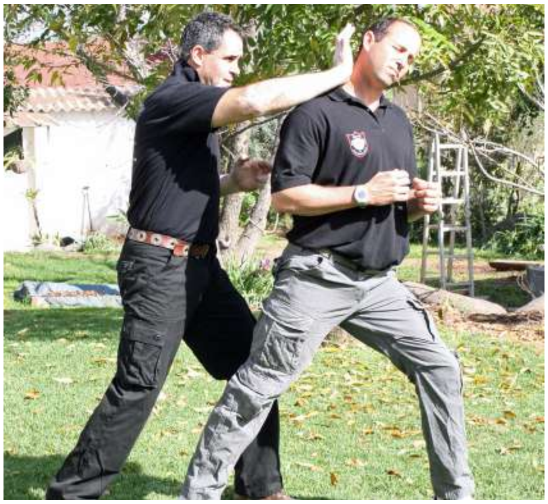
3. THIRD LINE TARGETS

Attacking the ***tertiary target***s is damaging and painful, but not easily crippling. Striking them will nevertheless cause a shock to be used for following up in the *Retzev*, preferably towards the groin or at least towards more serious secondary targets. Hitting these sensitive points causes physiological reactions that will (1) hurt the opponent, (2) add to the overall shock of the previous strikes and (3) give you enough time (in milliseconds) to keep attacking without allowing for a counter. *Tertiary targets are always part of a Retzev*, as a transition or as a distracting move (leading to something else).

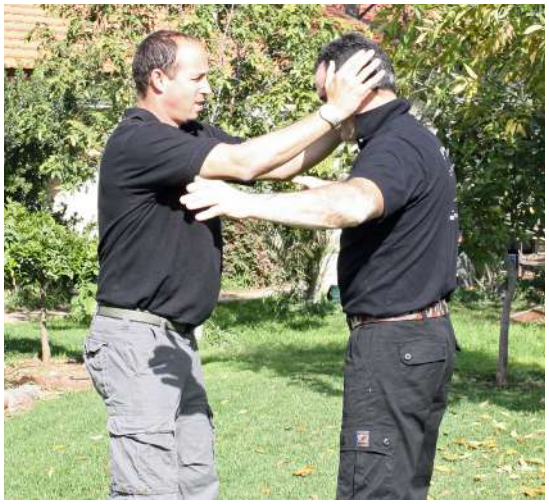
Here comes the Tertiary Targets List:

3.1 The Side of the Face.

This 'target' goes from the *temple* through the *ear* all the way to the *mandibular joint* (jaw hinge). The *temple* could be a secondary target if it was not difficult to pinpoint exactly in a stressful situation: a collapsed temporal area is crippling and can even be fatal. The *ears* are full of sensitive nerve endings and can tear easily, but the best way to attack them is with a *Palm Strike* (preferably Twin Strike to both ears) that will tear the eardrum (*tympan*) and cause a serious loss of balance control. Remember not to 'slap' but to strike forcefully through the target, like always. If you miss the ears and strike the hinge of the jaw, no big deal: it is very painful and can cause a serious dislocation that will win you the fight. The weapons of choice for the Side of the Face area are: the *Palm*, the *Knife-hand*, the *forearm* and the *elbow*; of course the *knee*, the *top of the foot*, the *tip of your shoe* and the *fist* are valid as well.



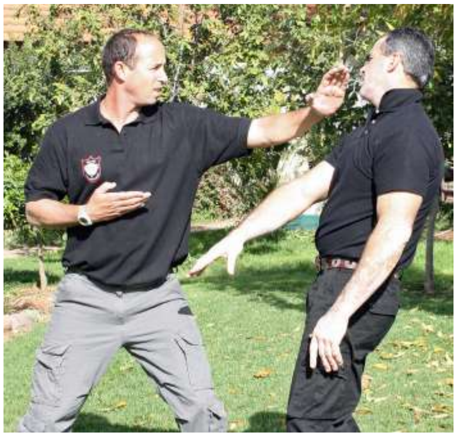
Palm Strike to the side of the face



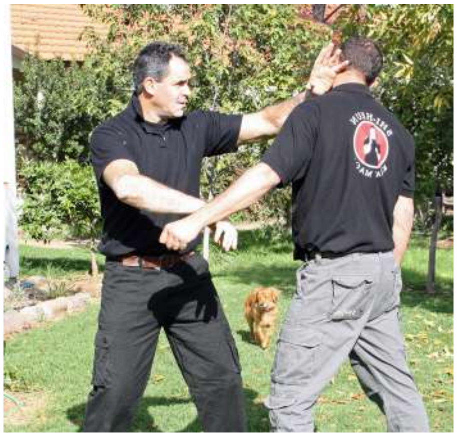
The concussing Ears Twin Palm Strike: simple but very damaging

3.2 The Side of the Neck (*Carotids and Vertebrae*).

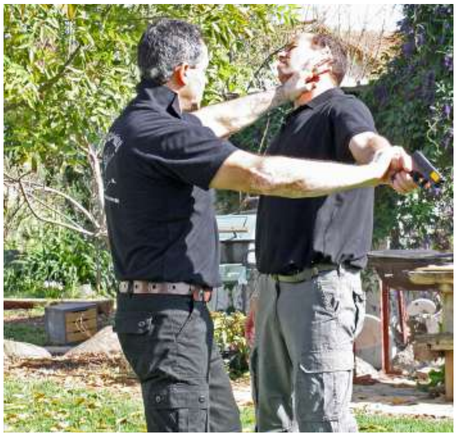
The ***side of the neck*** is a good target because of the veins and carotid arteries, as well as many nerve endings. You must strike powerfully '*into*' the target and not just 'slap' the surface. By doing so, you will also shake the cervical vertebrae. This sensitive target can be attacked with the *Knife-hand*, the *forearm*, the *elbow*, the *palm*, the *fist* and the *foot*. Should you miss slightly because of your opponent moving, you would still probably strike the side of the head, the back of the neck, the throat or the clavicle…



Knife-hand Strike to the side of the neck



another type of Knife-hand Strike to the side of the neck



Another side-of-the-neck strike

3.3 The Collarbone (*Clavicle*).

The ***clavicles*** are an underused target: these are bones that are relatively easy to break, which is very painful, causes serious internal damage and basically takes the corresponding shoulder out of the game immediately. The ideal point to strike, diagonally from above, is at about one third of its length from the throat side, but anywhere will be very effective and reverberate from the shoulder all the way to the neck. The collarbone can be attacked with the *fist*, the *hammer-fist*, the *forearm*, the *elbow*, the *Knife-hand*, and, in the right set-up, with any part of the *foot*.

3.4 The Solar Plexus (*Celiac plexus*).

This network of nerves at the pit of the stomach is very sensitive to a reverberating strike; it is close to the stomach and the aorta. The general area to target is in the middle of the trunk just below the chest-bone (*sternum*). On top of being very painful, a strong blow causes the diaphragm to spasm, and hence difficulty in breathing. It can also affect the nerve plexus itself and damage the viscera. Knocking the wind out of an opponent will, of course, allow you to follow up easily. Pinpointing the exact *solar plexus* point is not always easy in stressful situations, but a powerful penetrating strike in the general area will generally be good enough. Kick with any part of the foot, but kick '*into*' the target. The *straightened fingers*, the *knuckles*, the *fist*, the *elbow* and the *knee* will make good penetrating weapons too. The *head* and the *palm* can also be used if their striking trajectory comes from below or straight on (not from above).

3.5 The Floating Ribs (*False and Floating Ribs*).

The term '***floating ribs***' is loosely used in Martial Arts, as it usually also includes the so-called 'False Ribs'. The False Ribs (Ribs 8 to 10) are so called because they are not directly attached to the chest bone (sternum), but are so through a cartilage link to the 'Real' Ribs above them. The Floating Ribs (Ribs 11 and 12) are not attached at all to the sternum in any way. The common denominator is that they both are 'weak' ribs that do not protect very well the internal organs under them. Moreover, well-delivered Kicks can easily cause damage to the ribs themselves. You can also use the *knee*, the *fist*, the *elbow* and the *forearm*.

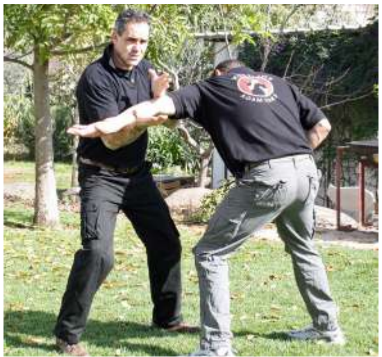
Lower back Kick

3.6 The Kidneys (*Lower Back Area*)

Kicking the ***lower back area*** is very efficient: it is painful and causes a disturbing concussion that will open the assailant to easier follow-ups. You should kick '*into*' the general area just above the belt: it encompasses the sensitive kidneys, but also the vertebrae. A powerful Strike will reverberate along the whole of the spine and into the lower internal organs like the liver. It also often kicks the wind out of the opponent because the shock causes the diaphragm to contract. Pinpointing the *kidneys* with the *knee*, the *fist* or the *hammer-fist* is possible, but targeting this area is more the realm of a kick, especially the Circular Kicks connecting with the *ankle* or the *shin*.

3.7 The Elbow Joints.

Striking the ***elbow joint*** with power can destroy the opponent's ability to keep fighting, but breaking the elbow will only come if you strike the elbow of an extended arm from outside while keeping the wrist in place. Most regular strikes to the elbow will numb and cause pain to allow for a follow-up. Remember to strike *through* the elbow, all the way. Use the *Knife-hand*, the *forearm* or the *crescent kick* presented in Part One. The other good way to destroy the opponent's elbow to prevent further attacks, is to stomp the elbow of an opponent on the ground, which is entirely justifiable in the case of a life-saving situation (especially against an armed assailant).



Elbow Break attempt: Knife-hand Strike while keeping the forearm in place

3.8 The Hands (*Wrist and Fingers*).

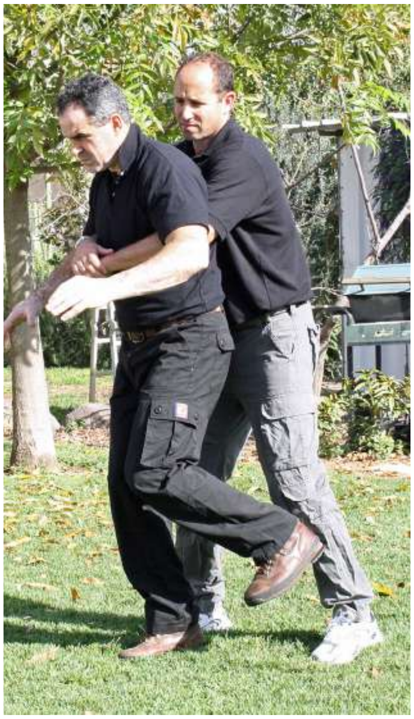
Damaging the opponent's ***hands*** will prevent his ability and will to keep on fighting. That goes without saying. Striking the wrist of an assailant with the *knife-hand* or the *forearm* can rattle him, but the best way to take the attacking hands out is to stomp on them when the opponent is on the ground. Do not hesitate: crushed fingers are very painful and will seriously diminish your opponent's abilities and belligerence.

3.9 The Feet (*Ankles to toes*).

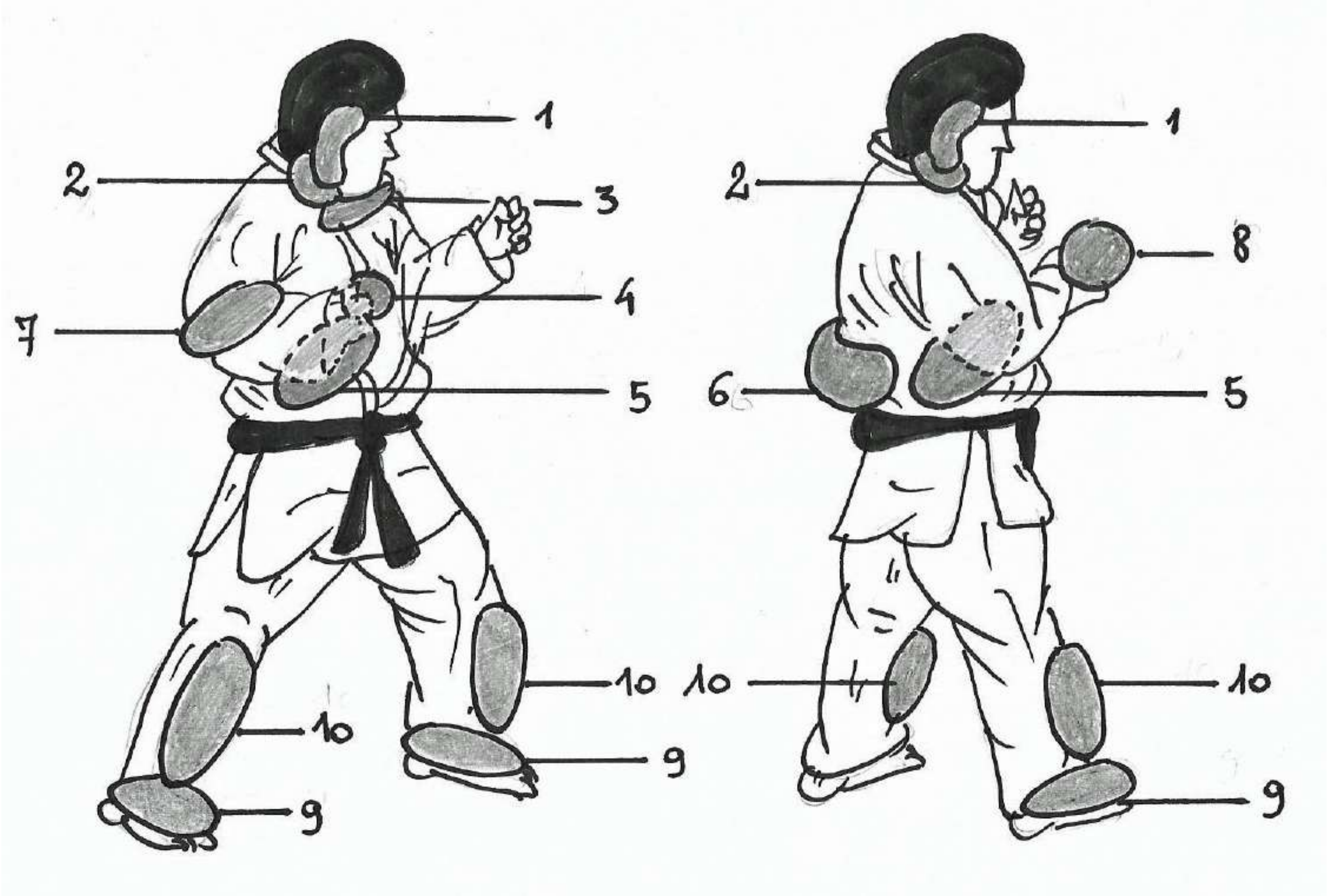
What is true for the hands/wrists/fingers is doubly true for the ***ankles/feet/toes***. The only differences are: that you can (1) crush those also when your attacker is still standing, and (2) that a damaged foot will hamper the opponent's ability to move and stand. Foot Stomping is an underused maneuver, which makes it usually more surprising. It is very easy to perform and fiendishly effective. You should do it nearly automatically whenever possible. The only drawback is that it requires you to be close to the opponent. But if you find yourself close for any reason, go for it...

3.10 The shin (*Tibia and Fibula Bones*).

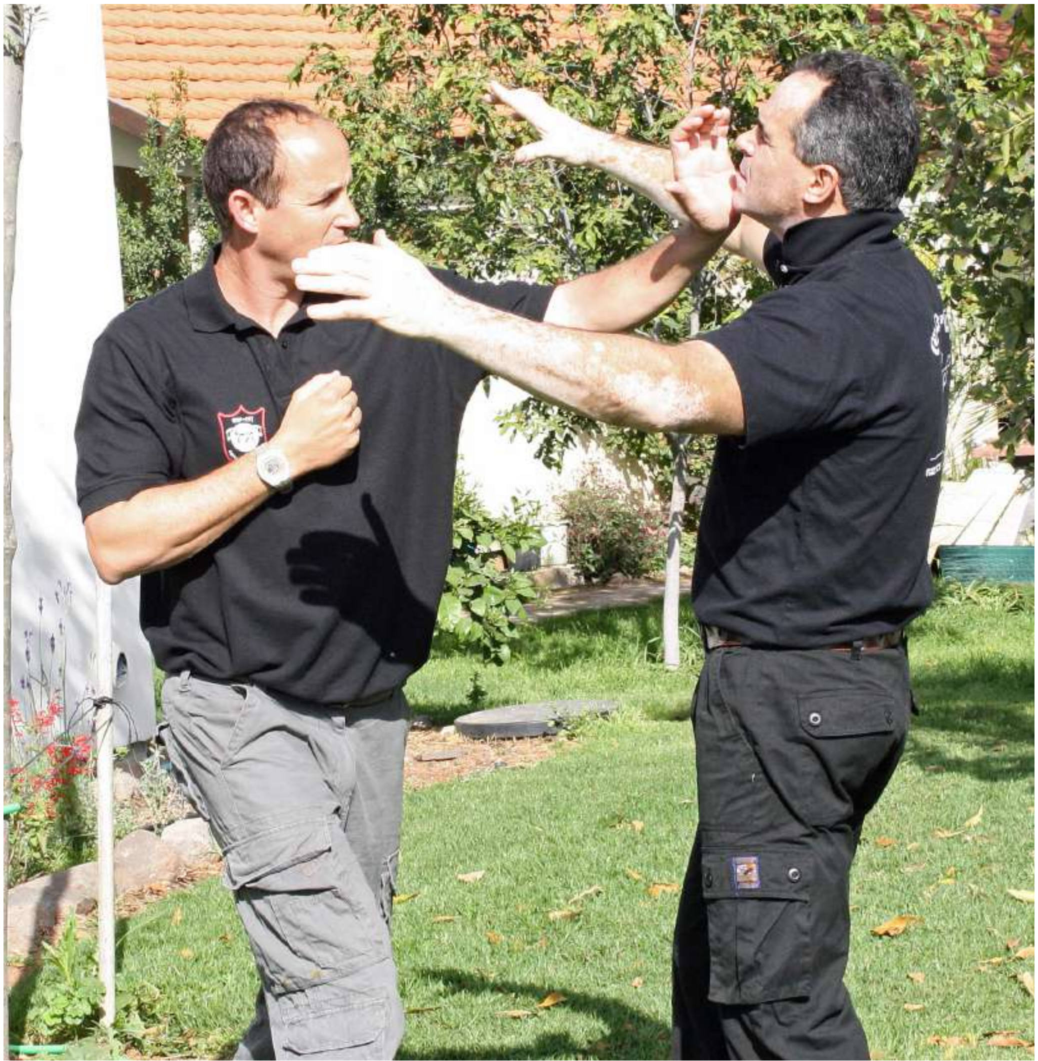
The ***shins*** also undeservedly make for underused targets. The shins are very rich in nerve endings and the shinbone is pretty prone to damage. Kicking the shins is also pretty easy to do with fast kicks, if you execute them stealthily without moving the upper body, or if you kick just after feinting high with the hands. Kicking the shins is always a great opener, or a fantastic diversion before a decisive attack; it is extremely efficient if you have *hard-tipped shoes*. Shin Splints and Stress Fractures will be the mildest results of a hard-soled shoe striking 'through' the tibia. Drill the Kick and use it whenever possible.



Kicking the sensitive shins. With shoes!

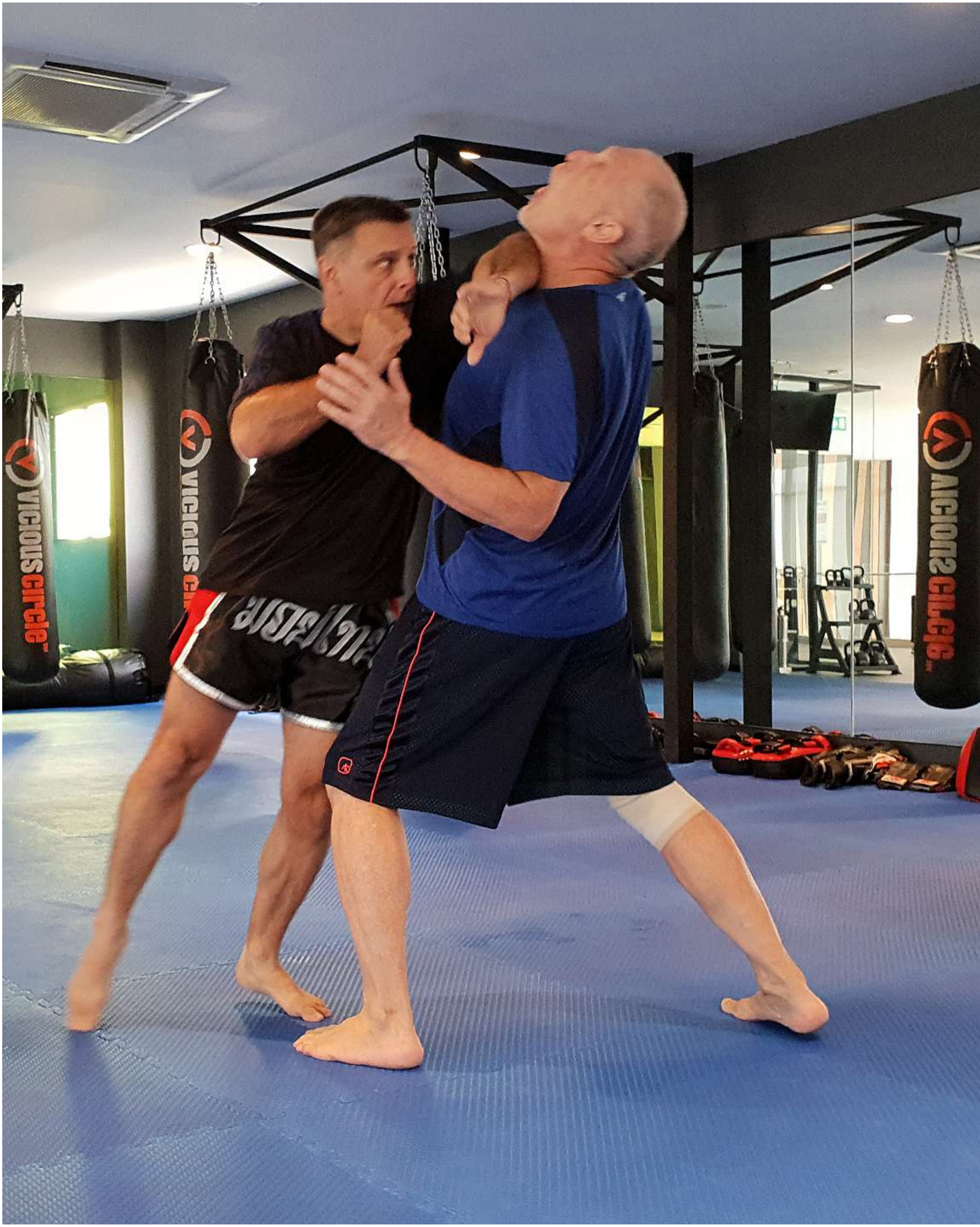

1
2
3
4
7
5
10
10
9
9
1
2
8
6
5
10
10
9

The Tertiary Targets of Krav Maga



Palm Strike to the face area: nose crush and fingers near the eyes

Self defense is the clearest of all laws; and for this reason - the lawyers didn't make it.
~Douglas Jerrold


viciouscircle
viciouscircle
viciouscircle

Part Two

VICTIMOLOGY

The theory of aggression

איך לא להפוך לקורבן

2.1 Awareness

The world is a dangerous place, but most of our readers live in countries where security is provided reliably by the State. Such people are educated to reject violence and to behave civilly towards their fellow citizens. This, in turn, makes it difficult for them to deal with serious aggression by asocial elements of society. And unfortunately, muggings, violent break-ins, sexual attacks, car-jackings, hate aggressions, bullying for ego-boosting and terrorism are not uncommon anymore. It happens, and it can happen to you, even though you are a normative socially responsible tax-paying citizen who expects to be protected by the authorities.

*The first ste*p to avoid becoming a victim is **vigilance**. Be always ready! And use common sense: do not carry more money than necessary, separate big bills from the pocket money needed for everyday transactions, do not take nightly long walks in deserted places, be aware of your surroundings when using the ATM, do not flaunt jewelry and expensive watches, do not open your car before you have checked the surroundings, lock your doors at home and in your car, do no attract unnecessary attention…

The second step is to try **not to look like a victim**. Research has shown that human predators definitely choose their victims intuitively, based on their demeanor and on their gait. You should walk around with self-assurance, alertness, a straight spine and a purpose. Look around and scan your environment. In problematic areas at least, avoid at all cost the earphones and the smartphone screen.

In times of crisis, there are only two things we can try to control: *emotions and behavior.* They must be handled as well as possible under the stress caused by the outside environment. Of course, how to handle an aggression will be very dependent on your personal history, on your fighting abilities and on the way that you are impaired by said stress. That is why, once you have mastered the techniques, you must drill them realistically, and that means: *under pressure and under stress*. The atavistic stress reaction of Freeze/Flight/Fight must be rewired to 'fight only', because the 'freeze' (to stay unnoticed by predators) and 'flight' (from said predator) are not relevant to the modern animal we have evolved into. Familiarity of dealing with attacks under some training stress will teach our unconscious brain to react immediately to an aggression. That is what the practice of *Krav Maga* is all about.

Your general fighting abilities are very important when you are challenged: the more comfortable you feel about being able to handle an aggression, the more relaxed you will be in the verbal handling of the challenge, and the higher your chances of defusing the situation. Therefrom derives, again, the importance of **serious training** in self-defense techniques.

If the aggression materializes, *your worse enemy is stress*: it will impair your reactions and your common sense. It is where training comes, again, to the rescue. Learning *Krav Maga* or other self-defense methods is not about collecting 'miracle' techniques. **It is about achieving muscular memory with intensive and repetitive drilling**. In a stressful situation, your body is basically on its own: if you have trained hard, it is a good thing. Your body will react instinctively and use automatically the most suitable techniques in its muscular memory. This is why hard work and *the focus on a few good techniques* is so important.
The other important attribute that is needed for survival in times of crisis is: **determination**. You have to be ready to do what is needed to survive, and it is not as simple as it may seem. As a normative citizen living in a protected society, your survival instincts have been dulled by social rules and a regulated environment. When you are being attacked, you find yourself in a different world where all rules have been abolished by your assailant. Be it for sexual, ideological, hate or financial reasons, your physical and psychological integrity is at risk. If you are a woman about to be raped, are you ready to stick your thumb into the predator's eye? You should! And you should think about it and familiarize yourself with the possibility, because it is probably not natural to you. Considering the consequences, you have no other real choice; but you should not have to think about it then.

2.2 The Verbal Phase of an Aggression

Conflict avoidance should always be your first priority. Self-defense is all about protecting your body, not your honor or your pride! If you have invaded someone's personal space, bumped into him or done anything wrong, apologize sincerely while staying vigilant and assertive. Do not reply to insulting comments or challenging stares (look sideways, not down!); just ignore and *walk away*. If someone starts to bully you verbally, to annoy you in order to elicit a reaction or to make himself look good, *walk away*. It is not cowardice but the intelligent and moral thing to do. Nobody knows how serious the consequences of a fight can be. Of course, walk away with vigilance and heightened attention. If the potential aggressor wants your wallet or your watch: give it to him. Within reason, no worldly possession is worth your life, your physical integrity, the safety of your loved ones or a long prison sentence for having won the fight. Just remember though that this 'giving up' does not include rape, the infliction of pain or the kidnapping you or a loved one away to another place.

➡

The legal framework around the right to self-defense is very similar in most of the Western and Westernized World: if using force, you have to be able to prove that there was no alternative (like *walking away*), that there was true intent to cause you physical harm, and that you have used a responsible and *proportional* amount of force to place you out of danger. The reader should realize how heavy the burden of proof is for the winner of the fight, especially to a few judgemental people in armchairs in a climatized room and who are not in a state of justified stress! Several American States have on their books the right 'to stand your ground laws'. These laws are based on a sound and rightful principle: normative citizens should not live in fear and be cowered into fleeing or giving up their wallets when challenged by bullies and criminals. The author agrees fully with the ideas and principles behind these laws, but must remind the reader that it is better to be wise than to be right. An apt comparison would be the right of way at a roads crossing: even if you have the right of way, it would be wiser to yield to a crazy driver flying through without slowing! In case of an aggressive challenge, the modern Hebrew aphorism "Be wise, not right" (עדיף להיות חכם מאשר צודק) should also be heeded. Even if you are right and indignant: *walk away if you can*. A fight has always serious consequences: you could make a mistake and get seriously hurt (just for your ego or some money); you could win the fight but could have to live with having caused serious injuries to another human being and you could find a jury mistakenly disagreeing with the amount of force you have used. Stress can make you bypass your logical brain and go overboard. Even if the law allows you to stand your ground: be wise and walk away if you can. The emphasis is: If you can...

A disagreement should be negotiated before it turns into a challenge, and then into an aggression. Usually, a bully will become violent if he does not obtain what he wants by demanding and threatening. If you are verbally challenged, you should remember that the exchange will decide whether this turns into a fight or not. Most assailants will not challenge or attack anyone they do not expect to beat easily; it is a law of nature true even in the animal realm. **The victims are chosen by the predators**. **It is important not to look like a victim.**

In most cases, the potential aggressor feels threatened or affronted by you, or he is looking to assert his social dominance (just like with social animals). In those cases, it is sometimes possible to defuse the situation by responding verbally to the problems *in an assertive but non-threatening way*. Of course, if the potential aggressor is inebriated, under drug influence or in a psychotic rage, reason and de-escalation will not work; it is best to ignore the person and walk away immediately if possible. Always remember: **It is never too late to negotiate and it is never too late to flee!**

When challenged verbally, you have first to become psychologically ready. Remember that, in such an exchange, **your body language and the tone of your voice are even more important than the words you utter**. As a matter of general principle, you should avoid threatening, challenging, ordering or defying the protagonist. Be assertive, but all the while, get your body ready to act and to preempt if necessary. You should be basically ready to press the button that turns you from a normative citizen into an animal in survival mode, because, -make no mistake-, the stress of a violent altercation brings out animal behavior on both sides.

If your potential aggressor starts talking louder and becomes more threatening or more insulting, let him express himself while staying fully ready if you discern the start of a physical attack. Talking out could help him calm himself. Listen to him empathically with no insulting or bored mimic, without interrupting and without contradicting him. When he is over, you should try the reformulation of his grievances in order to start what is akin to a de-escalating negotiation. But stay vigilant, it is possible that nothing you say can stop the coming assault. Use a neutral voice that does not mimic his tone and aggressiveness and reformulate his diatribe; for example: "If I have understood you correctly, you think that I have made fun of you?". If he answers positively, you have started a 'negotiation' during which you can assertively but calmly convince him that you have not done so…

But it should be clear to the reader that most aggressions will happen anyway, the attacker having already decided that he will have no problems to physically beat you. If it becomes necessary, you should make clear that, although unnecessary in your eyes, you will do whatever is needed to defend yourself. Do so without lifting your fists or threatening him; just assertively and in a state of full readiness. In some cases, it can be what is necessary to convince him that you are not the victim he thought you were. If not…

2.3 The Physical Phase of the Aggression

You now understand that nothing will prevent a physical altercation. You have to be ready, and you must have been thinking about it in your training to get familiar with the possible situation.

Here are your options:

1. **Flee**. No shame in that, whatsoever. '*He who fights and runs away, may live to fight another day (Tacitus)'*. If you are in an inferior situation, outnumbered, clearly outmatched, or unarmed against an armed assailant, *run*! Throw your wallet and *run*. Throw your gym bag or attaché-case and *run*. No shame whatsoever. If you flee, run from darkness towards light, towards crowds, towards upper ground and towards first aid stations like police and hospitals.

2. **Pre-empt the attack**, as the preferable option of *Krav Maga*. Launch your attack as soon as you 'feel' that he is about to launch his. It is easier than it reads: just trust your gut and your sixth sense heightened by stress. You may look like the aggressor, but it is better than being struck first.

3. **Stop-strike the opponent's attack**, and start your own series of uninterrupted attacks until victory (*Retzev*). Second-best *Krav Maga* option.

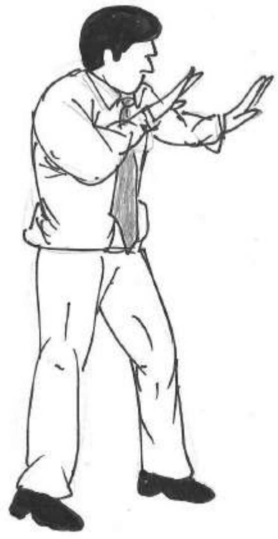
4. **Block and Counter**. Start a *Retzev* as soon as you have scored with a counter.

The big problem is that most people are not truly ready to do a preemptive attack, or even to counter 'all-out' until the opponent is vanquished. Social conditioning and ethical/religious upbringing make us to be 'shy' or fearful of strong reactions. Just as we are 'afraid' to ask for a salary raise, we are 'afraid' of preempting an attack. We are 'afraid' of asserting our right to self-preservation and we are inhibited to cause harm to others even if justified. In these extreme situations, this is a fatal paralysis. You need to imagine such situations, you need to understand the possible consequences and you need to be psychologically ready to do what is required to protect yourself and your loved ones.

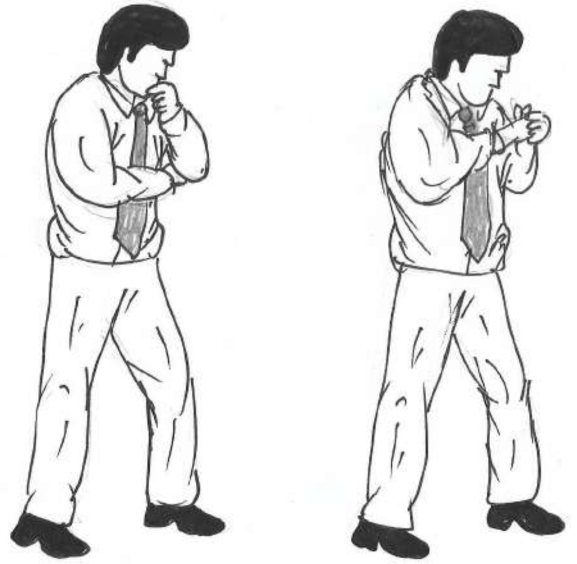
The natural stress reaction in such dangerous situations also hinders our abilities to react. It can cause fear paralysis and a distortion of straight thinking. This is why we need to train and drill: *we need to become familiar with comparative situations*. Stress causes a spike of some hormones, like adrenalin and cortisone. This has several consequences: a reserve of energy becomes available, the blood regresses from the periphery to the internal organs, the emotional part of our brain (*limbic*) takes over from the rational frontal cortex, and we lose some of our peripheral vision and hearing capacities (*auditory exclusion*). And we are afraid, which is totally natural.

Remember that we are all 'afraid' before a confrontation. Afraid means normally apprehensive; it does not mean cowardly or paralyzed. Do not think that it is shameful: it is normal. As a competitive fighter, I always had butterflies in the belly before climbing in the ring or on the mat. Action takes that away instantly.

Stress gives control to your emotional brain, which will cause you to react *instinctively* and *according to muscle memory*. The stress does not disappear, but it can be managed by acting in a well-rehearsed and rational way. Just like policemen or firemen do act professionally and according to their training when their services are needed, so can you base yourself on your training to cope with the stress in an actionable way.
Action can be first simply taking an 'appeasing' guard: be fully ready to attack or to stop-strike, but do it with the hands opened. Do not use an aggressive tone and try to defuse the situation. You have one foot forward and your legs are slightly bent. Your hands are up but open in a widely accepted calming posture; keep your chin slightly down and all your senses on alert. See first Drawing.
An alternative that disguises even more the fact that this is, in fact, a guard is to keep your hands up, as if naturally busy: holding your chin dubitatively, holding the lapels of your jacket, or your hands clasped as if wondering… See the second set of Drawings.



The appeasing guard



Alternative non-threatening guards: holding the chin or clasped hands held high

2.4 Danger Detection

The most important way to avoid violence is to remove yourself from a place or from a situation before anything can happen. For that you need to be constantly aware of your surroundings, and you need to trust your gut. I personally have been 'jumped' on (aggressed by surprise) twice during my (long) life, by criminal elements (I grew up in then very unsafe Congo); in both cases, my sixth sense warned me in advance that 'something was not right'. Everybody will have those intuitive warnings if he is aware of his surroundings. When that happens, do remember that social graces do not apply: it is not rude to let a question stay unanswered, or to cross the street to the other side. If you feel uneasy and something bothers you, it is OK not to come to somebody's help; you can take your distance and call for help, or you can first assure yourself that the situation is kosher. *Intuition* is based on a long experience of gathering social clues and of analyzing body language. If your gut tells you that something is out of sync, it is usually right and you should listen to it and ignore social inhibitions. By moving away from dodgy places or from weird individuals, you can prevent a dangerous physical confrontation.

Someone asking for directions, sweet-talking you or presenting his hand to shake could be preparing a surprise attack, especially if there is nobody else around. Be aware and trust your gut... Remember that it is your 'gut' that reads body language, and it is this sixth sense that will alert you if there is a disconnect between the protagonist's words and his real intentions.

Just like animal predators, human predators will try to ambush and surprise you. They will trick you, distract you and place you in an inferior setting from which there is no escape. Usually they will make sure they have the advantage of numbers or weapons. That is why **general awareness** is so important, and listening to your gut can be literally a life-saver.

Self-defense is not just a set of techniques; it's a state of mind,
and it begins with the belief that you are worth defending.
~Rorion Gracie

PART Three

Krav Maga Strikes

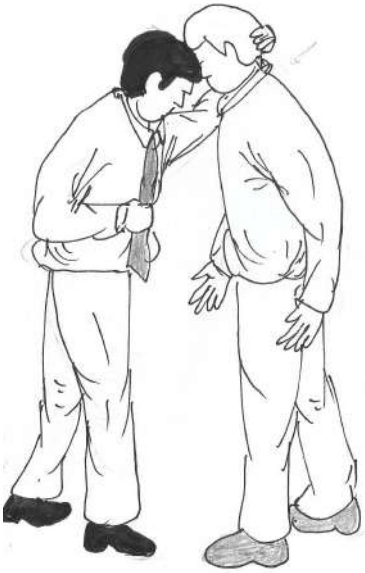
מכות בקרב מגע

By 'Strikes', we mean: not kicks...

3.1 The Headbutt

The Headbutt is a very easy technique to master and execute at close quarters. You simply must connect with the upper rim of the skull, about where the hair starts growing. And you must target *only soft and vulnerable parts*, preferably the **nose**.

There are two things to keep in mind:
-1. If you are close enough to execute a headbutt, *you are also close enough to receive one*.
-2. The natural reaction when detecting an incoming headbutt is to evade back, and therefore lift the chin. This can cause you to connect with the opponent's chin or teeth, which are 'hard' targets that can cause *you* open wounds.

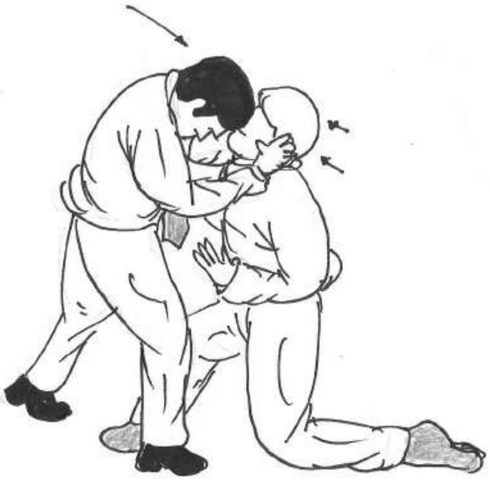


A forward Headbutt to the nose with head pull

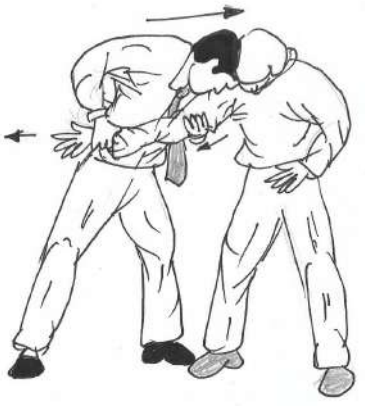
Generally speaking, exploding into a headbutt to the opponent's nose is usually very surprising and usually successful. It causes bleeding, tearing of the eyes, restricted breathing and shock. Follow up immediately; a Groin Knee Strike will usually flow very naturally. The power of the headbutt can be enhanced by grabbing the opponent's head and pulling it in during the strike: you can grab the hair or just the head as such, but the best option is to grab the ears (preferably after having slapped them).

The headbutt can also target the *side* of the head, as will be illustrated. The back and side of your skull crown can also be used for 'stopping strikes'.

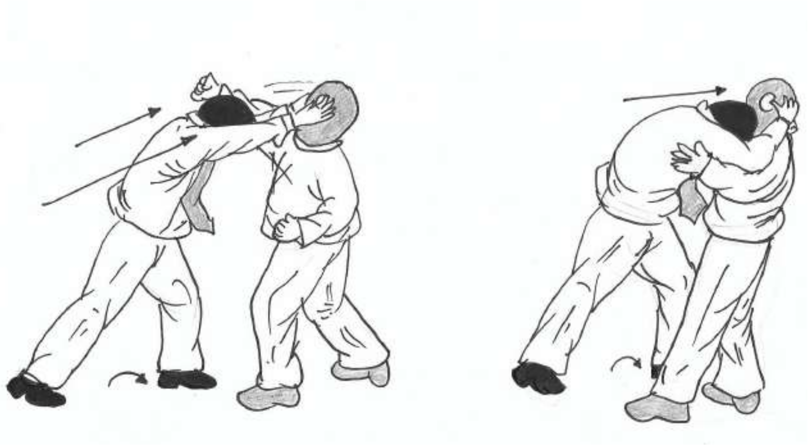
The headbutt should be drilled on a focus pad held at the right height by a partner.



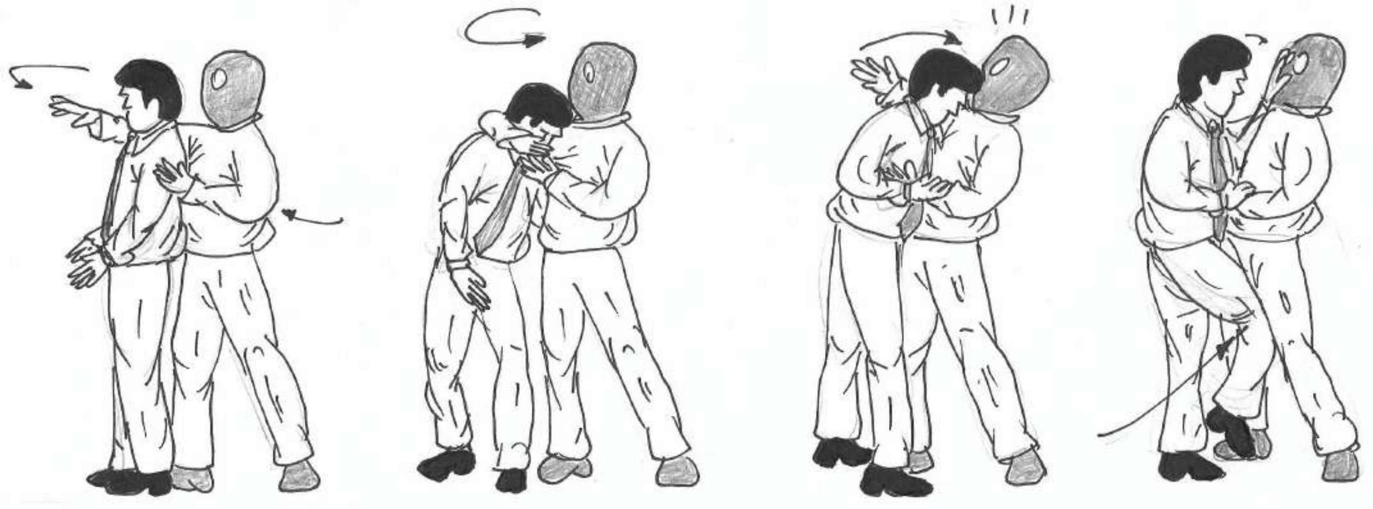
A finishing headbutt to the nose of a faltering opponent, with ear grab and pull



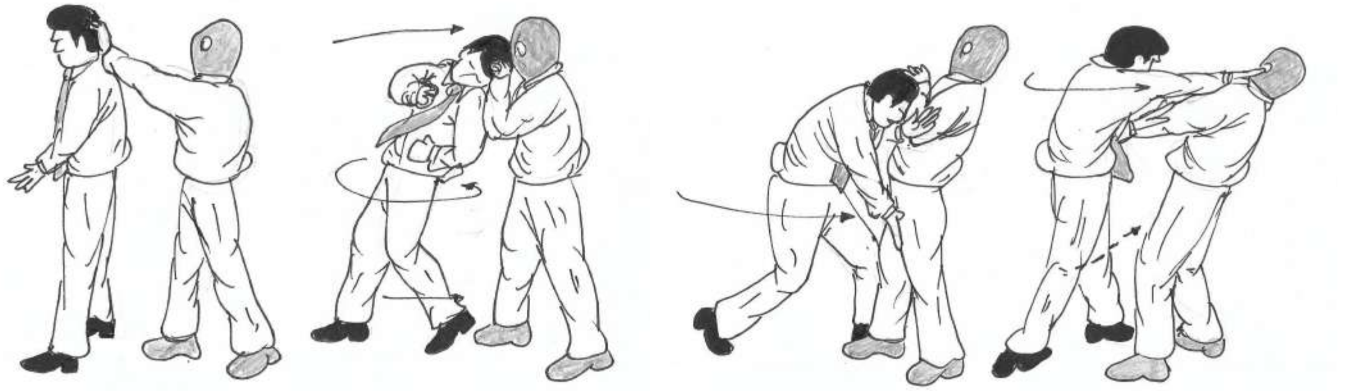
Arm Pull with a Head Butt to the side of the opponent's head: go for the general ear area



Applied offensive Headbutt



Headbutt as a stopping strike for a Rear Choke Attempt



*Applied **Side** Headbutt against a rear hair grab attack*

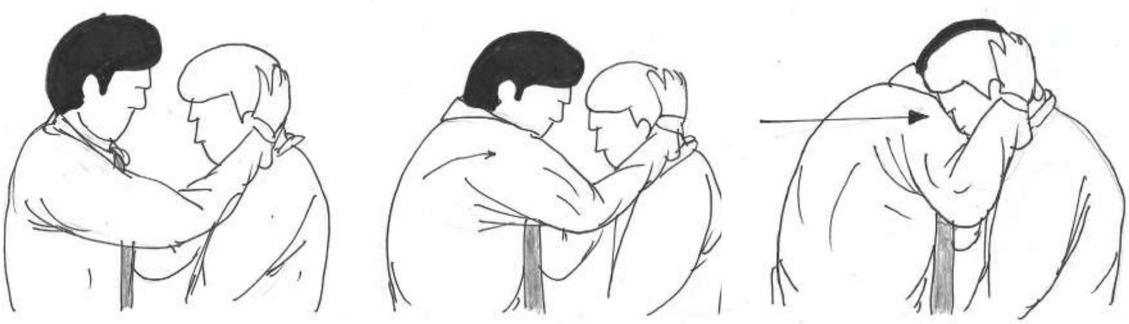
Applied Rear Headbutt, in a rear Bear Hug

Roy Faiga and Marc De Bremaeker, early 1990ies

3.2 The Shoulder Strike

The **Shoulder Strike** is an effective but underused technique for close combat. It is quite surprising and allows for very hard follow-ups, like the headbutt for example. Its main advantage is to protect you from a headbutt as you are close: your head will be besides his, and you will strike with your shoulder, then follow up. The important points are to strike with power and to aim at the **nose**, again.

There is not much to add: use it when you can. Drill it for familiarization and try to use it in free fighting. You'll become used to it and it will pop out automatically in clinching.



The simple but efficient Shoulder Strike: aim for the nose

3.3 The Elbow Strikes

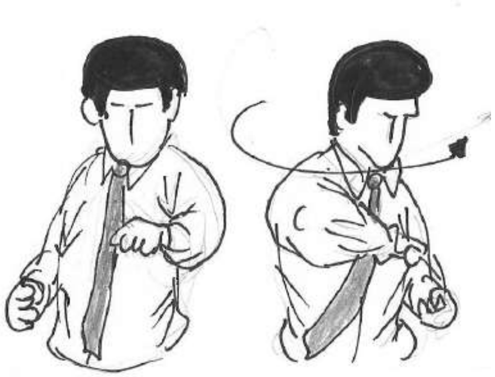
Elbow Strikes are very powerful because they use the big muscles of the trunk, and often are propelled by the hips. Moreover, the striking areas of the elbow are very resilient and will not be hurt by the strikes (unlike the fist); this is important because there will be no unconscious hesitation at striking, the way it can happen with an injured fist.

Krav Maga, at least at basic and intermediate levels, will limit itself to the use of the *simple* techniques only, as they are to be used under severe stress. For this reason, we shall present the important Elbow Strikes only and we shall omit the more sophisticated ones in spite of their efficiency (the Spin-back circular and the Vertical upward ones come to mind, for example).

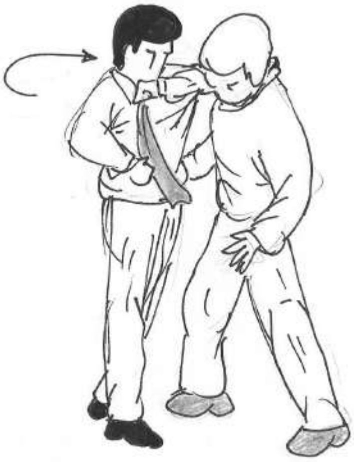
All Elbow strikes should be drilled for familiarity and for t*he use of the whole body*, against focus pads held by partners. It is important to get used to strike a few inches **into** the target, with hip power, and not to merely slap the surface of the target. Drill them and do not take them for granted; it will give you a powerful weapon if you take the pains to work them out.

a. The Circular Forward Elbow Strike

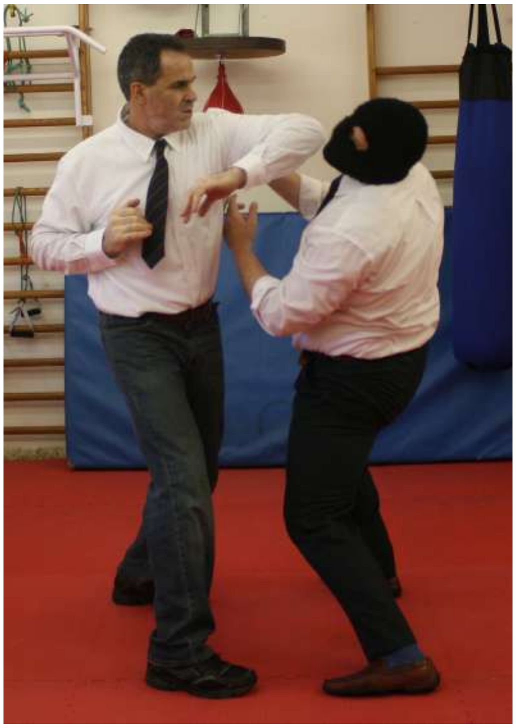
The principle of the strike is simple and illustrated in the Figures below. Just remember to strike *through* the target and to use the twisting *power of the hips*. The usual targets for the *Circular Forward Elbow* are the side of the head, the nose, and in certain respective positions, the throat. This elbow strike lend itself to easy and harsh follow-ups with the same arm.



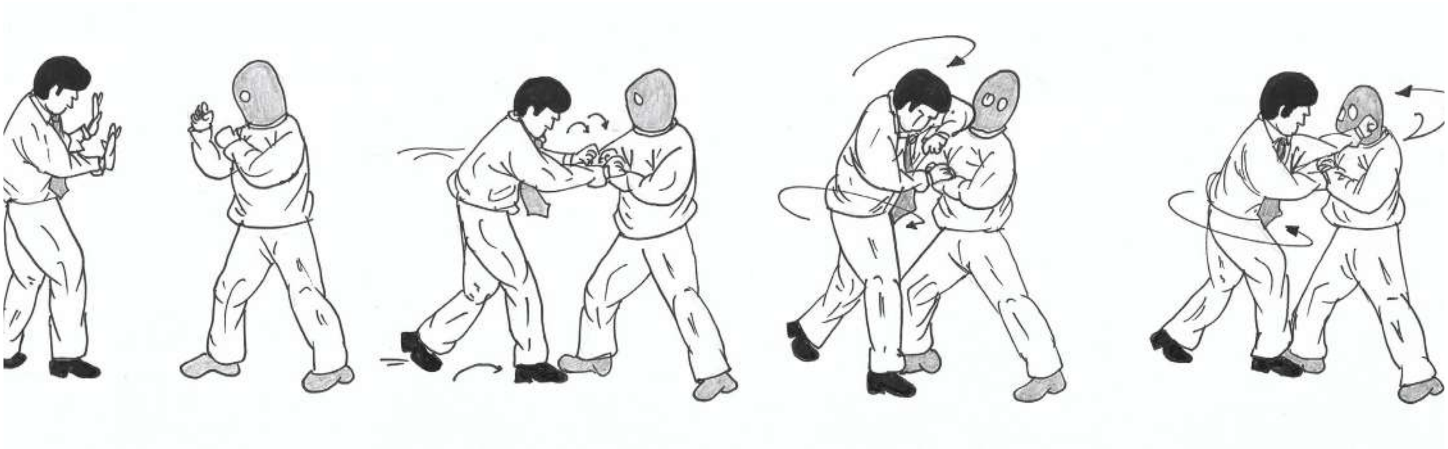
The basic technique for the Circular Forward Elbow



Applied Elbow Strike to the side of the head



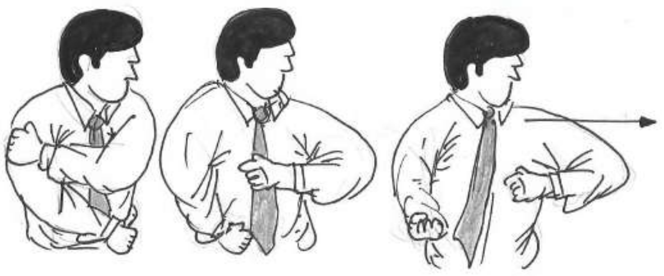
Circular Forward Elbow to the Jaw Hinge; look at the hips



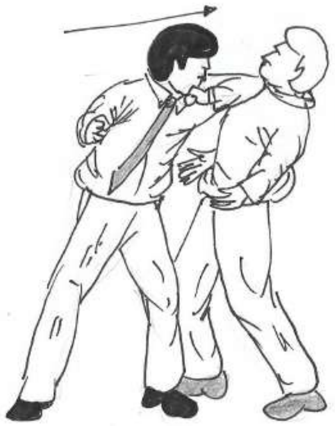
Offensive Applied Circular Elbow and natural Hammer-fist follow-up

b. The Lateral Elbow Strike

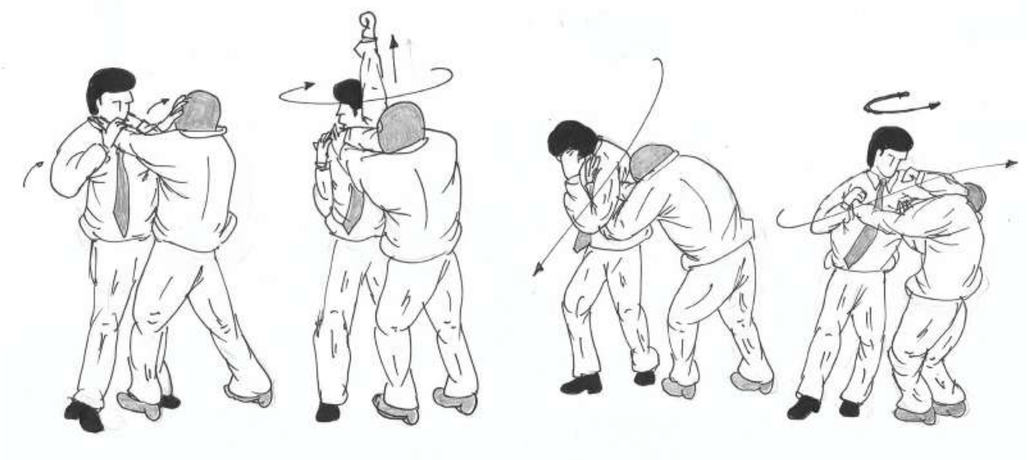
The *Lateral Strike* is simple and natural, as illustrated below. Just use the power of the retraction of the other arm, and put your body weight into the strike. Again, aim for the side or the center of the face, **or the throat if possible**. If you are in a low or very low stance compared to the opponent, you can target the solar plexus or the groin. It is a very fast strike, to be used whenever adequate.



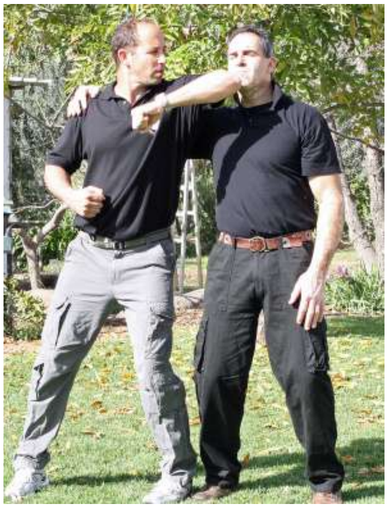
The straight Lateral Elbow Strike, fast and powerful



Applied Lateral Elbow to the throat



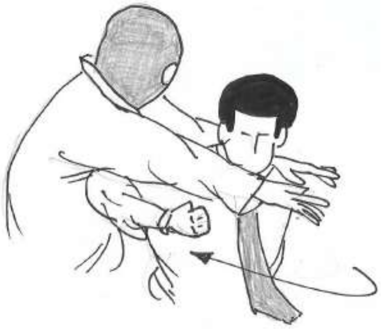
Applied Lateral Elbow in an attempted front choke release; look at the use of the body in the release and in the strike itself



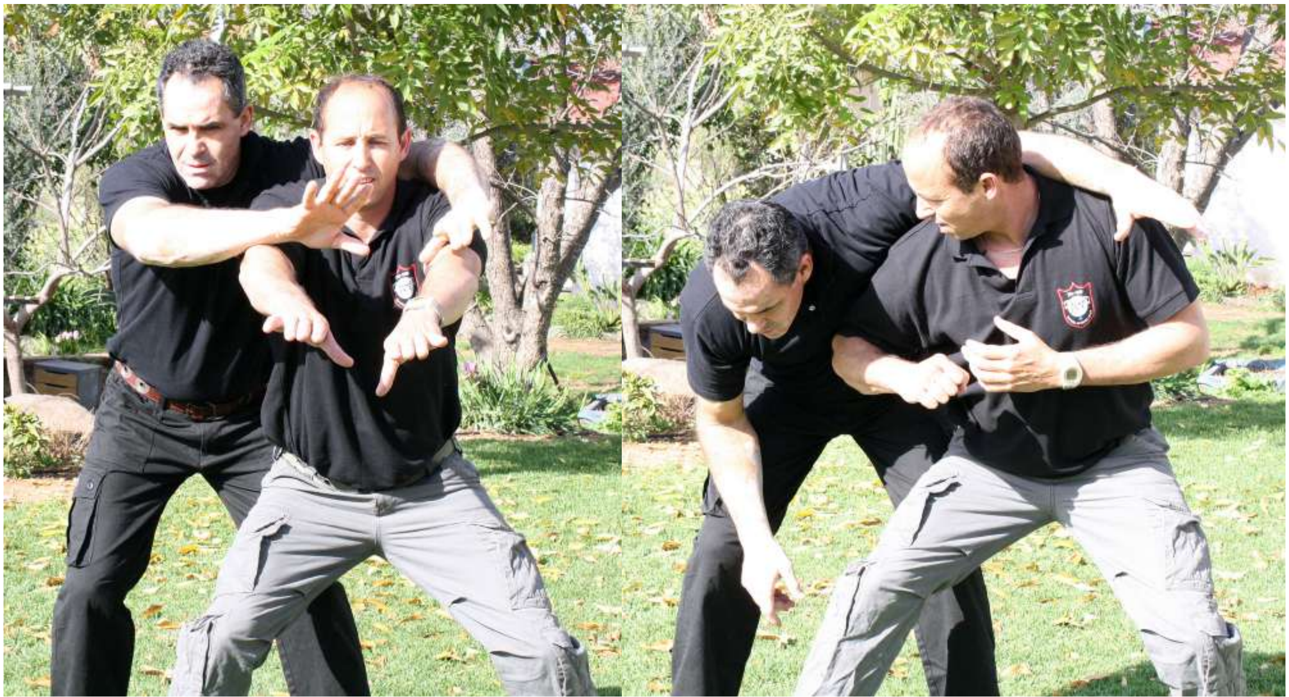
Preemptive applied Lateral straight Elbow

c. The Straight Back Elbow Strike

The **Straight Back Elbow** is even more natural: just hit back behind you. It is very powerful because of the back muscles involved. It is of course a situational technique, to be used in very specific situations of attacks from the rear. It is worth drilling the strike though, to make it powerful when used. The targets are the solar plexus, the armpit, the floating ribs, or the groin if you can crouch low enough.



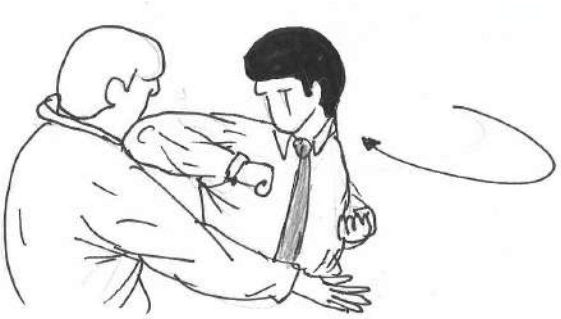
The Straight Back Elbow Strike



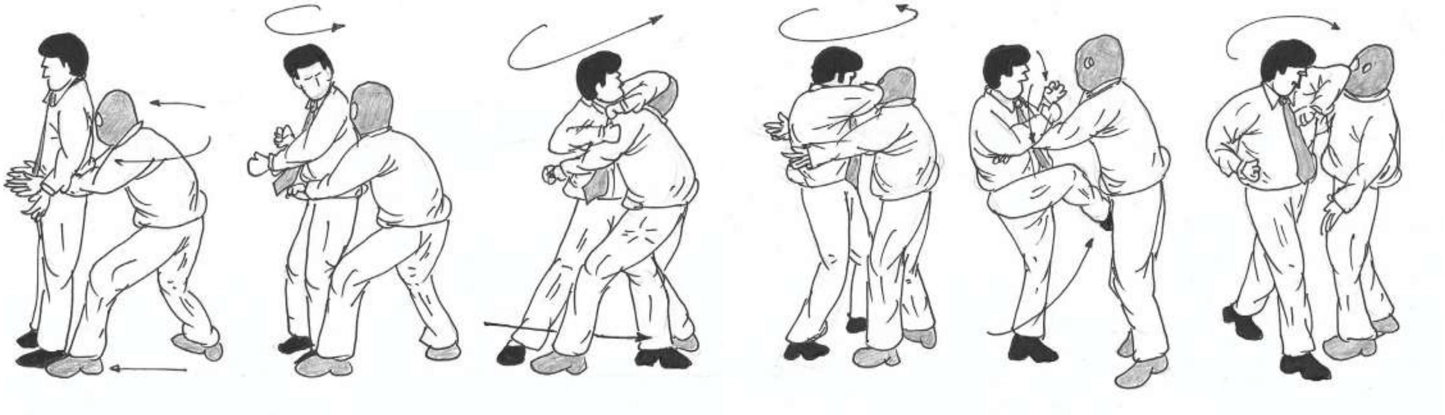
Applied Straight Back Elbow in a Rear Bear Hug attempt defense; strike with all the power you have

d. The Circular Back Elbow Strike

The **Circular Back Elbow Strike** is even more powerful than the straight one because it adds the power of the hip twist. Strike *through* the target, usually the head, and follow up. The technique lends itself naturally to follow-ups that use the pivot and the strike-through, for example a Circular Forward Elbow Strike with the other elbow that uses the momentum of the original hip twist. The Strike exists also as a redoubtable Spin-back attack, but not to be recommended to *Krav Maga* beginners because of the blind spot while spinning back.



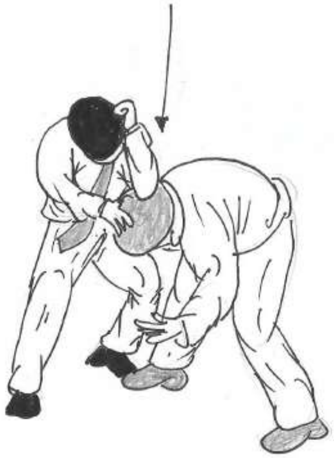
The basic Circular Back Elbow Strike



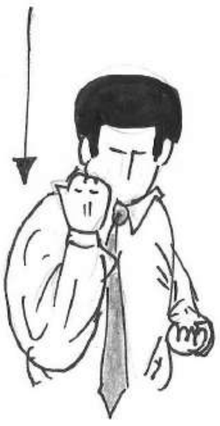
Applied Circular Back Elbow against an attempted Bear Hug Hold; the naturally following technique is a Circular Forward Elbow with the other arm, and then more

e. The Vertical Downward Elbow Strike

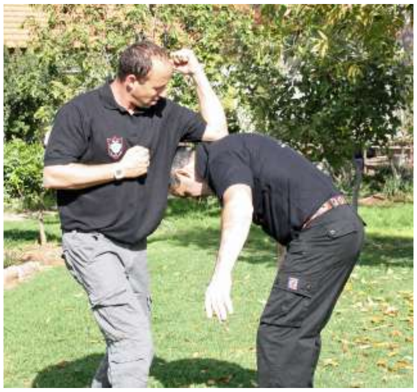
This is a very easy to understand strike, used usually against the *back of the head* or the *back of the neck* of a crouching opponent. It is a very dangerous technique to be used with extreme caution. The strike is obviously a very good follow-up to a successful Groin Kick that causes the opponent to bend in pain. But it can also, in certain situations, target the clavicle or the upper back between the shoulder blades.



Applied Downward Elbow to the back of the head



The Vertical Downward Elbow Strike



Downward Elbow to the back of the neck

Downward Elbow to the neck held in place by a Knee Strike; Serge Coucke on Marc in the 1970ies

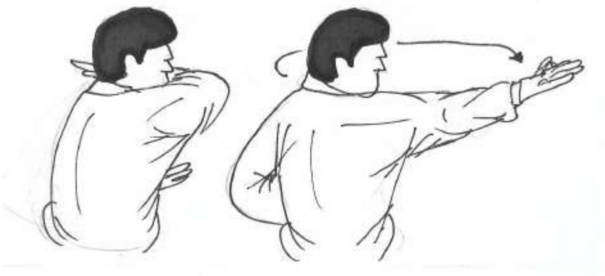
3.4 The Knife-hand and Forearm Strikes

We present the **Knife-hand and Forearm Strikes** together because they are identical in execution. You can connect with the blade of the hand ('Karate chop') or with the forearm, according to the distance or the requisites of the situation. These strikes aim exclusively at soft targets, like most of the time in *Krav Maga*. The most common target will be the **neck** from all sides: the side of the neck, the throat or the back of the neck of a bent-over assailant. But these strikes can also target the side of the face, particularly the jaw hinge, and the nose. The Downward Knife-hand Strike is also sometimes used to attack the clavicle.

There are **Four** basic and effective ways to strike with the open hand (or with the forearm): outwards, inwards, vertically down and straight forward. The Illustrations and Photos will provide the necessary examples.

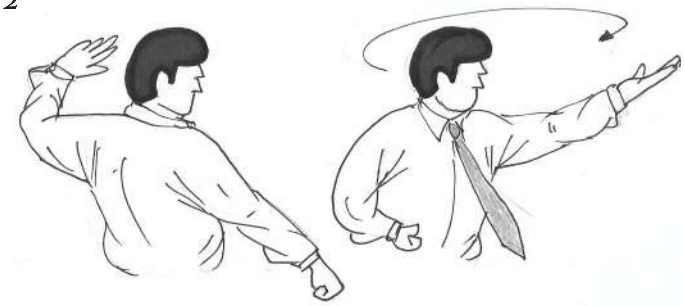
It must be noted that all four executions can be made to connect with the forearm *or with the hammer-fist* instead of the blade of the opened hand, according to the distance, the target and your personal preferences. The Forearm Strikes are usually more of the 'straight-forward' type, and the Hammer-fist should be preferred for all strikes that do not target the neck (where the 'thinner' open hand has more chances to connect with the carotid or the throat).

1



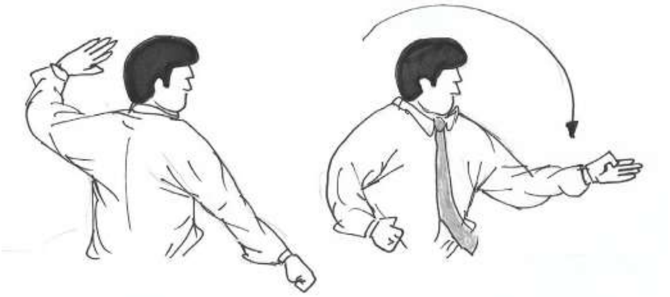
*The **Outward** Knife Hand Strike*

2



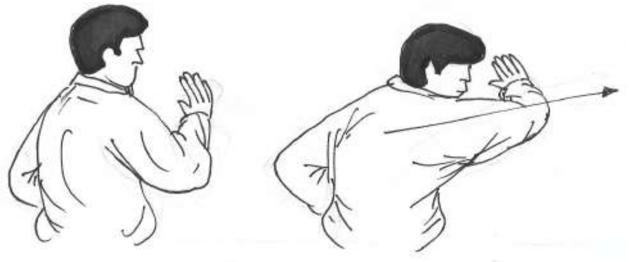
*The **Inward** Knife Hand Strike*

3



The Downward Knife Hand Strike

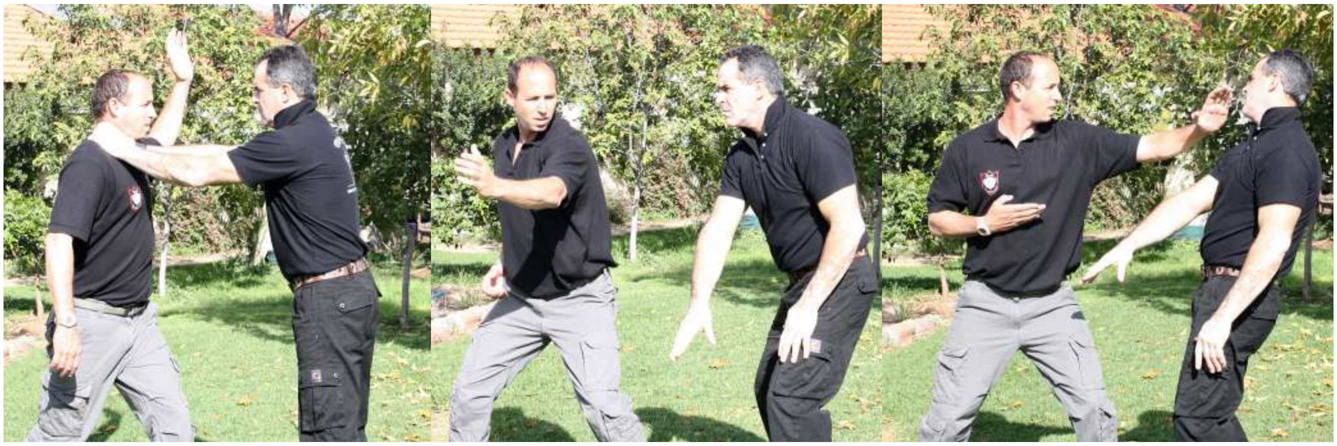
4



The Forward Knife Hand Strike

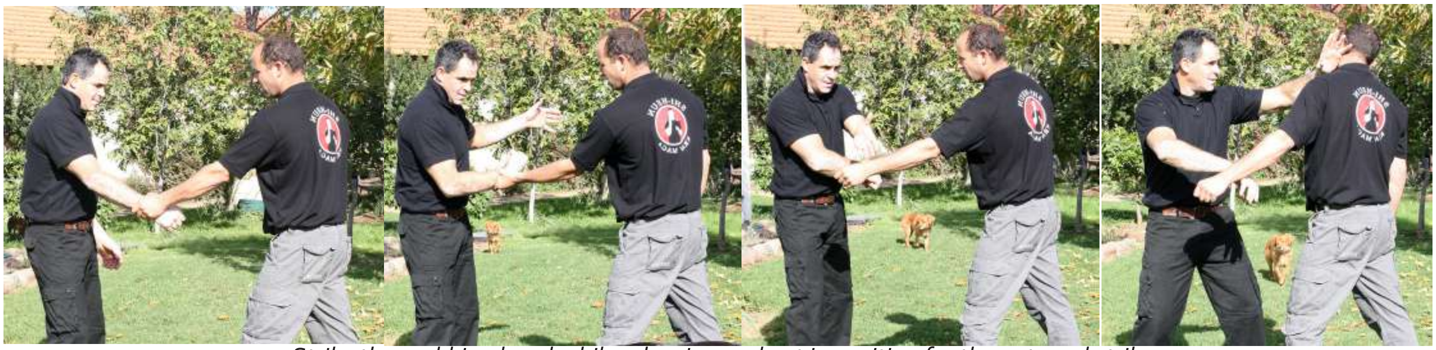
3.4.1 The Outward Knife-hand Strike is probably the most effective, practical and naturally-flowing. It is executed *with the whole body*, usually after a blocking or attacking move that has taken you sideways relatively to the opponent. It should target the throat or the side of the neck, preferably.

For example, in the next set of Photos, the Release technique from the Choke places you sideways, in perfect position for the *Outward Knife-hand* to the neck.



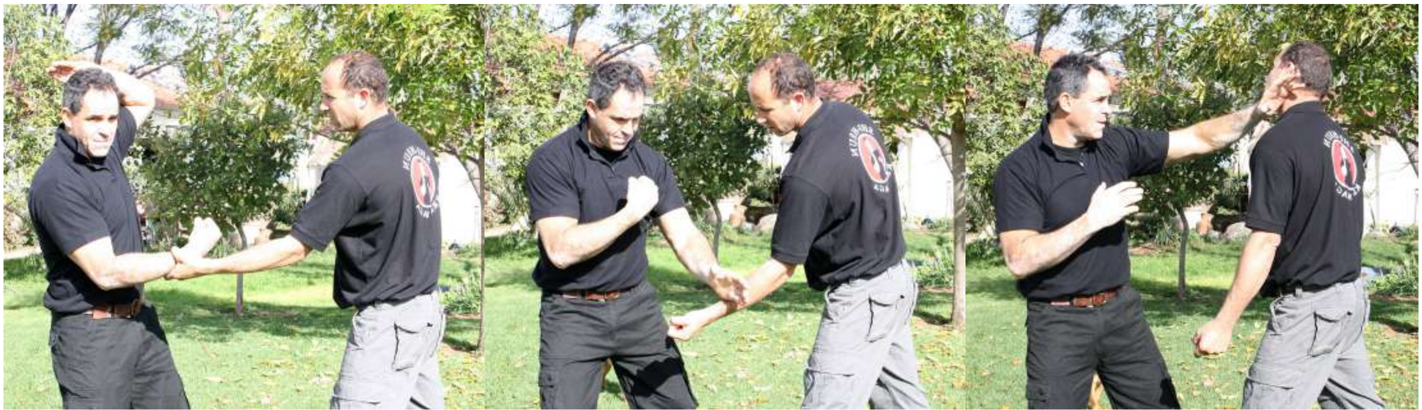
Pivot inwards for the Release, come back outwards with the Strike

The release technique from the wrist grab in the next example also places you in perfect position for the Outward ‘Chop’”



Strike the grabbing hand while releasing and get in position for the outward strike

It can also be a same-hand Downward Knife-hand Strike that places you in good position, like in the next example.

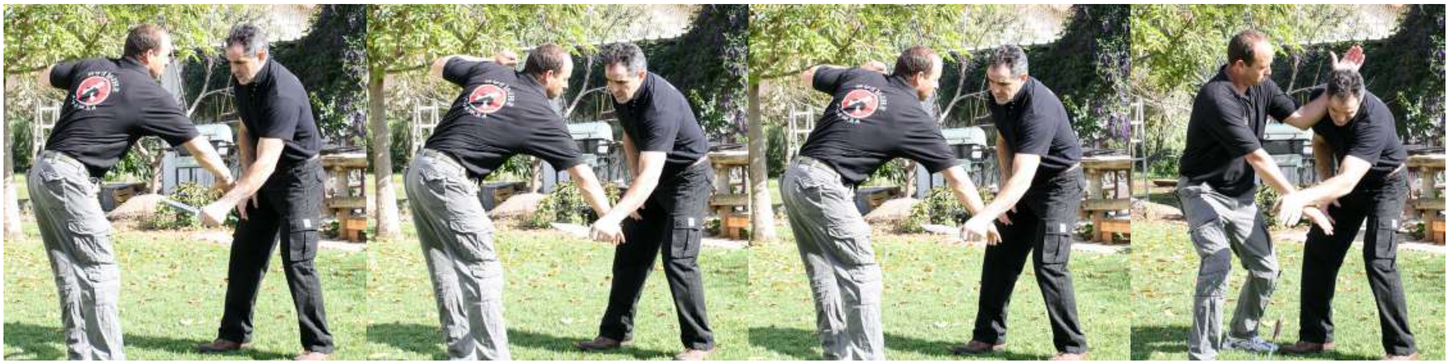


Use a Downward Knife-hand Strike to help release your grabbed wrist: you are now sideways and ready to attack his neck with an Outward Chop

3.4.2 The Inward Knife-hand Strike is a less natural and more sophisticated technique that requires training to be useable in stress situations. It also has the disadvantage of 'opening' your guard while you are chambering. But it is very suitable in certain situations, or if you are a trained Martial Artist. Go exclusively for the **throat** or the **neck** though.

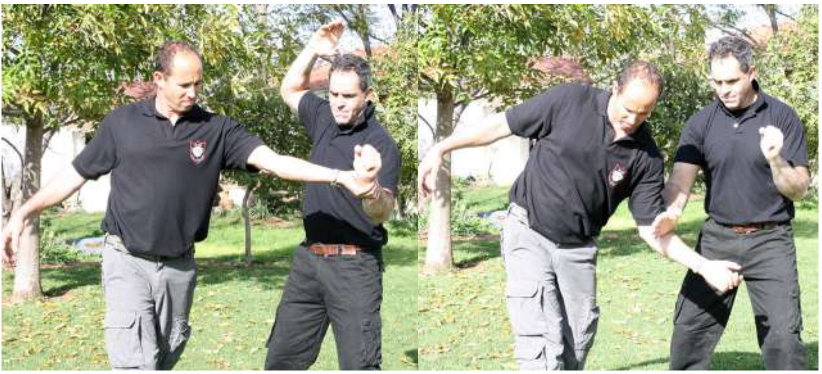
Chambering the Inward knife-hand in an appropriate situation; go for the throat

Inward Knife-hand Strike to the neck on evading a Kick; Marc on Rui Monteiro in the 1970ies

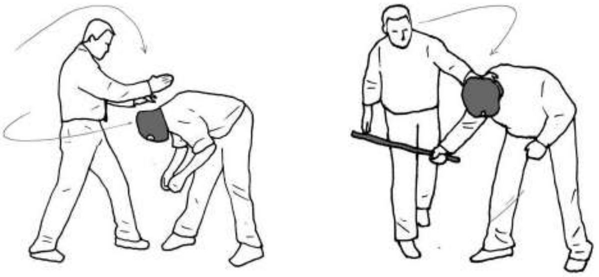


The Inward Knife-hand Strike to the neck in a Defense against a surprise low Knife attack

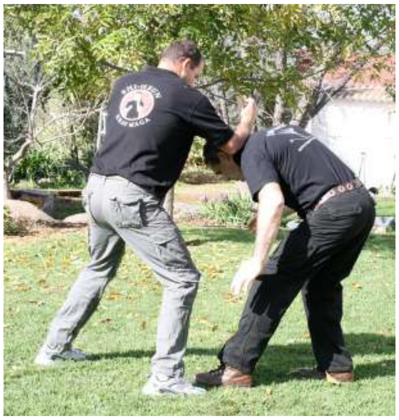
3.4.3 The Downward Knife-hand Strike is, on the other hand, very natural. Striking down on something comes easily and intuitively. The Strike is best used with a clenched fist in 'Hammer-fist' style, unless it targets the arm, the neck (of a bent-over opponent) or the clavicle of the opponent. The Hammer-fist is stronger, more massive and safer for the hands. The Knife-hand is best used for narrow-access targets (throat).



Strike downwards on the fleshy part of the forearm, near the elbow



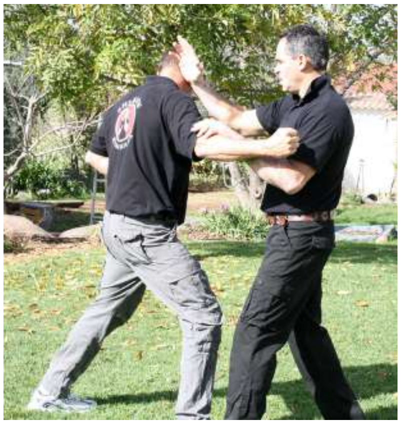
Downward Knife-hand to the exposed back neck of a bent-over opponent: more examples



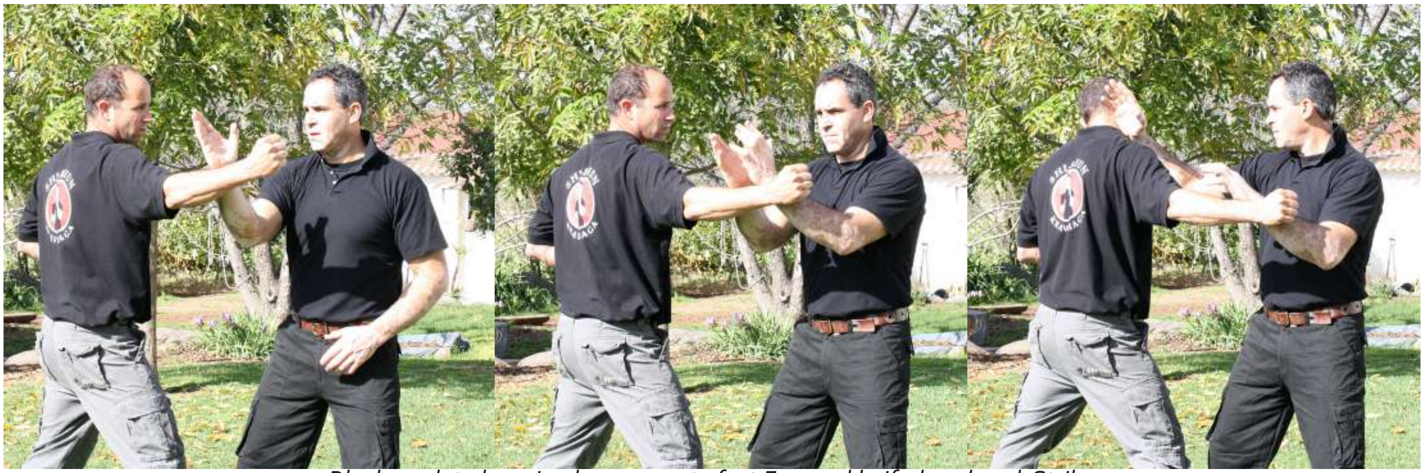
Downward Strike, impact clearly with the Forearm

Downward Knife-hand Strike to the back of the neck; **Master Sidney Shlomo Faige** *in Krav Maga demonstration in the 1980ies*

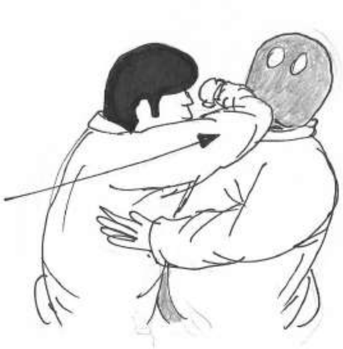
3.4.4 The Forward Knife-hand Strike is slightly less powerful than the previous 'chambered' Strikes, but it is fast and it uses the body to support it in its forward momentum. It is also often slightly 'outward' because of the position of the hand at the start, which confers it some more power from the hips. As will be illustrated separately, it is often used advantageously *with the forearm* as the connecting weapon. It should also limit itself to attacking the **neck** area under the *Krav Maga* principle of targeting exclusively the most vulnerable points possible. If you can grab the opponent's arm to keep him in place, the power of the Strike will be multiplied (See further).



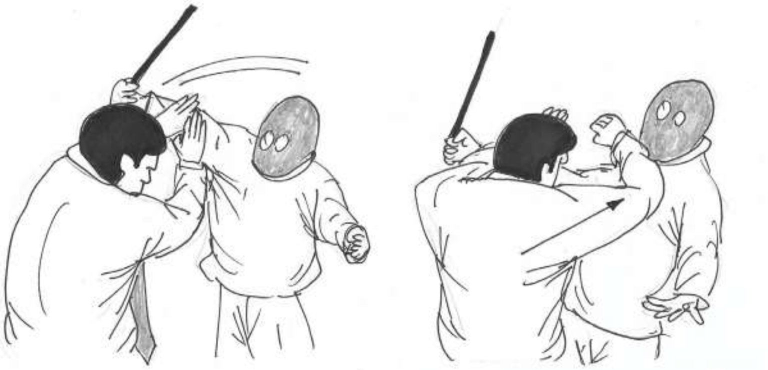
Target the neck

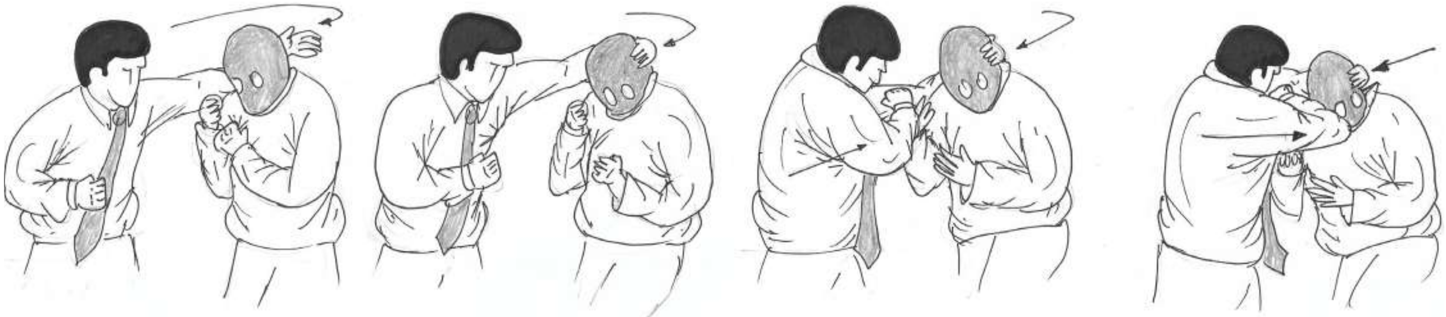

Block, grab to keep in place, execute fast Forward knife-hand neck Strike

The Forward **Forearm** **Strike** is similar to the previous Knife-hand version, but executed from close to the attacker. It is used with the whole body pressing forward and targets, again, the neck or the throat. Its best execution will have your other hand catching the opponent's head to pull it in as you strike (See below).
The technique needs familiarization and training on the heavy bag to become a very powerful weapon in your arsenal.

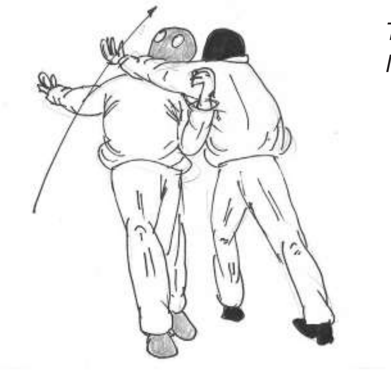

The Forward Forearm Strike

It is a forward-going move; go for the throa

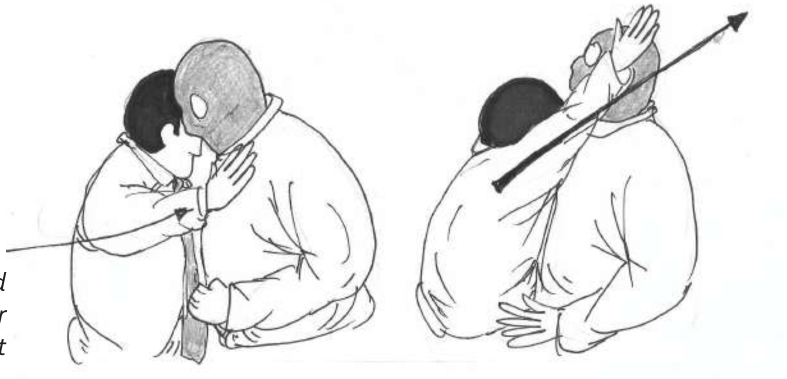



More effect if you can pull the opponent's head in; the nose can be a target

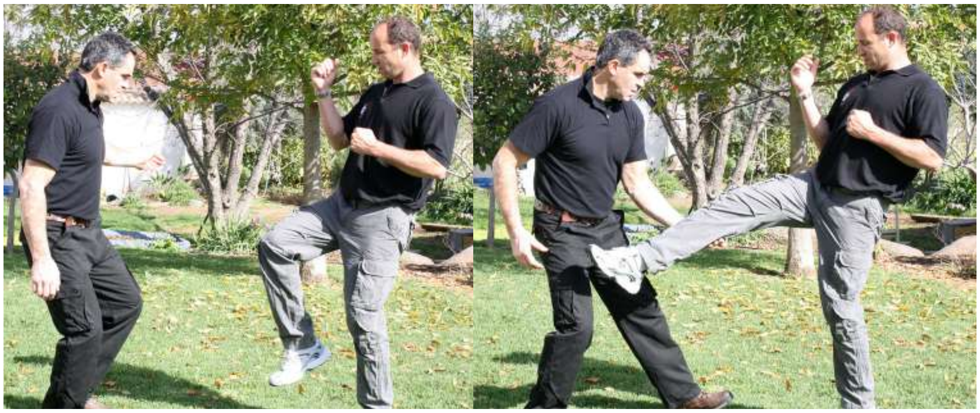
The Inner Forearm 'Clothesline' Strike is a different Forearm attack, but we present it here with the other Forearm Strikes. The use of the internal ridge of the hand or the internal forearm is part of traditional Martial Arts, but too sophisticated for the *Krav Maga* use under stress. But the *Clothesline* move is an important exception because it is easy, natural and extremely effective. It is used with a diagonal forward evasion and aims at letting the opponent run himself into the strike, like into an invisible rope stretched at throat level. You simply overtake your momentum-driven opponent and strike at throat level. The rushing-forward opponent adds his own momentum to the power of yours and of your strike. At contact, you should go *through* but also *diagonally up* with your arm (to lift his chin).



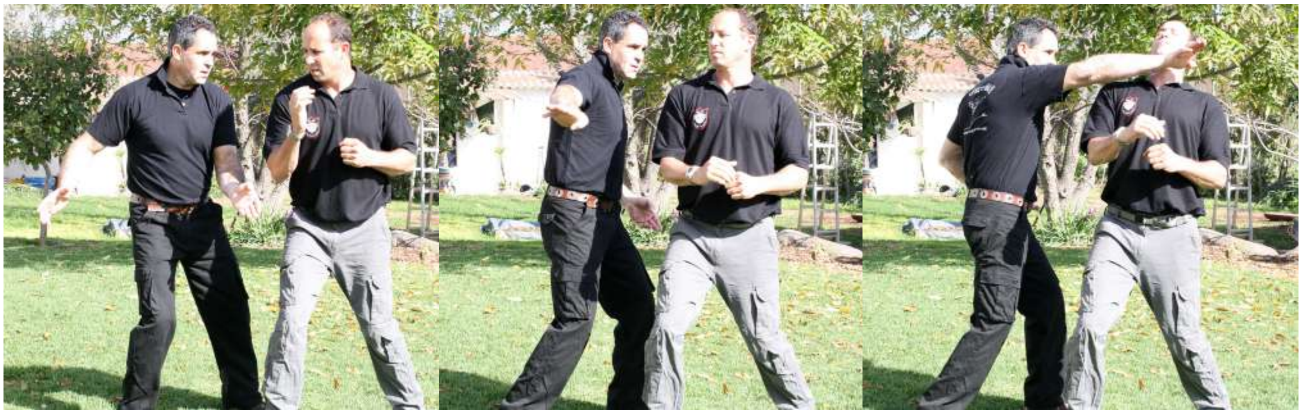
The Clothesline Maneuver



Go through and slightly up after contact



Applied Clothesline Forearm Strike against a straight kick



3.5 The Punches

The reader is obviously familiar with punches and there is no need for over-presenting them. But here is the place to explain the author's views on the use of Punches in self-defense. **I think that punches should be avoided as much as possible in the drilling of self-defense techniques**: they should be replaced by *Palm Strikes*! Unless you can strike with some certainty and accuracy the nose, the solar plexus or the floating ribs, punching can cause damage to your wrists, hands and fingers in the midst of the fight. Remember that these techniques are to be used in very stressful situations, where technique can become sloppy because of your hormones. Remember that your hands are not bandaged and gloved like those of a boxer. Remember that you are not necessarily a thoroughly experienced boxer, *karateka* or kickboxer. Remember that your opponent has hard bones here and there, and teeth...

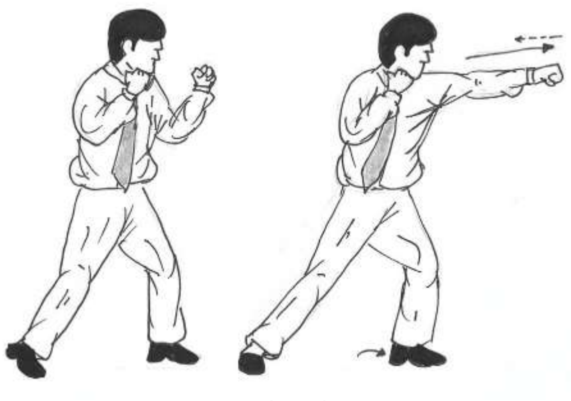
Even in sporting context, the author has suffered and witnessed numerous hand injuries from punching the opponent, and this, in spite of the relative protection of the rules of engagement, of bandages and of gloves of different types. The author has also witnessed trained individuals getting open wounds and joint damage from real-world punching.

Losing a weapon (your hand) in the middle of a fight will not be conducive to a fast and easy victory. Of course, it could NOT have to happen: you could succeed in your punches with no injury. But is it not better to increase the odds in your favor by not taking the risks? Your choice.

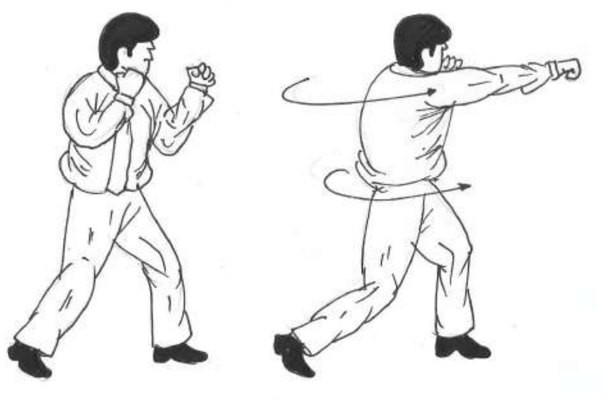
But it is the author's advice that, unless you are a well-trained boxer and unless you can target with confidence soft targets, *you should avoid punching as much as possible*.

Replace your straight punches by identical Palm Strikes (to be presented later).

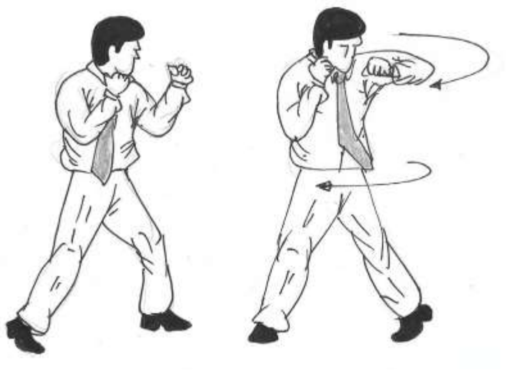
We present below, for illustrative completeness only, the main trivial Punches.

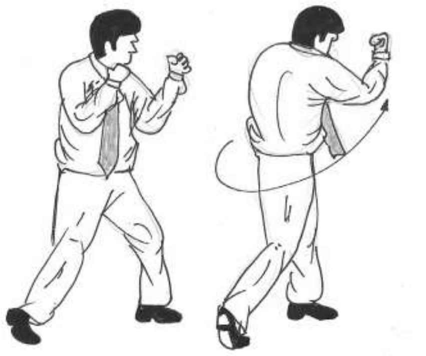


The Jab



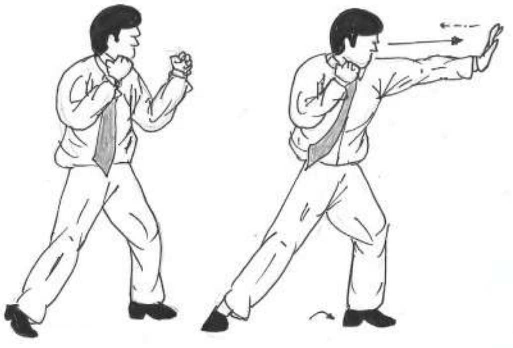
The Cross

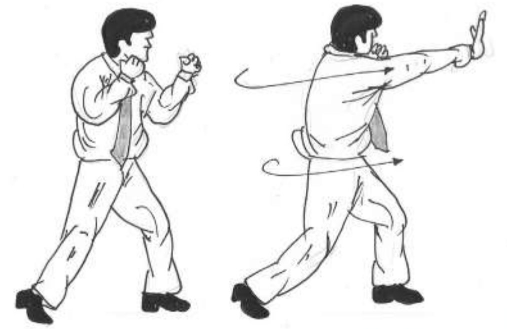

The front-hand Hook


The rear-hand Uppercut

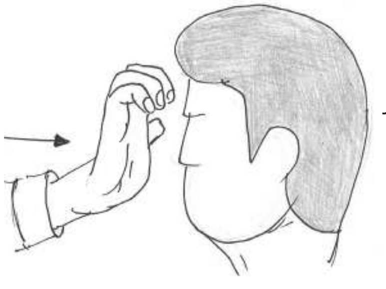
3.6 The Palm Strikes

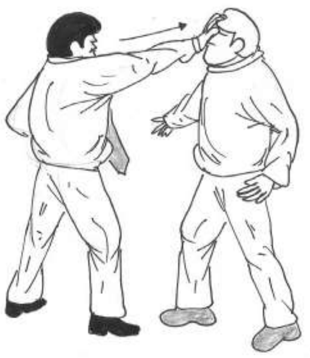
As explained above, the author thinks that Punches should be replaced by straight **Palm Strikes** for reasons of safety, to keep your hands and fingers unharmed. Most Punches can simply be replaced by identical techniques executed with an opened hand. Impact is with the lower and fleshy part of the palm, close to the wrist. Strike the nose, the chin (slightly upwards), the side of the face, the floating ribs,...


The Palm Jab

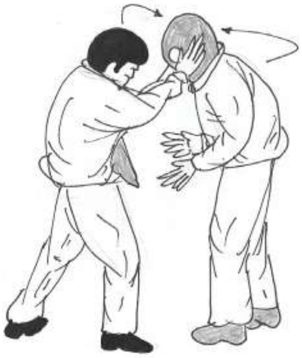

The Palm Cross

Palm-striking **the nose** is especially recommended: it is an easy and very sensitive target in the middle of the face, and, while striking it, you also have your fingers landing in the general area of the eyes!


Strike the nose straight on and look where the fingers are

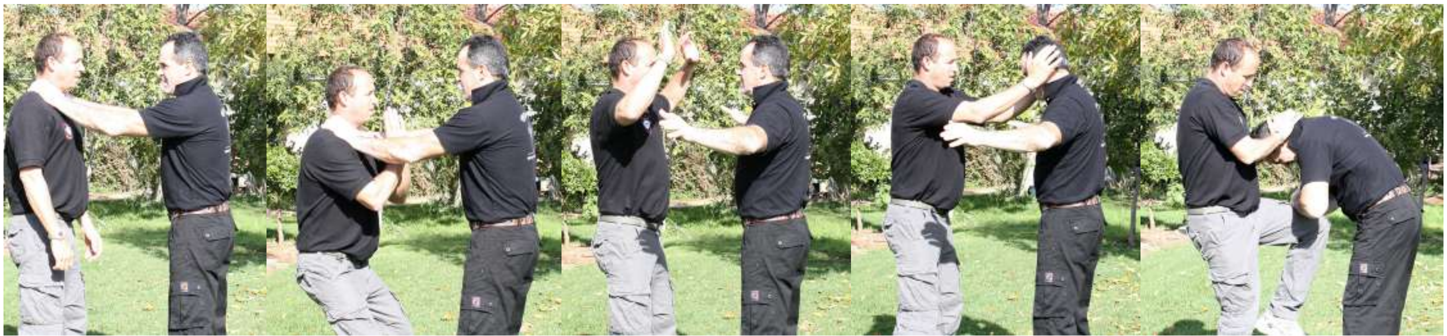

Strike straight a few inches into the middle of the face and let your fingers claw the eyes

Another important use of the Palm Strike is the classic **Twin Slap to the ears**, very fast and easy to place when you are very close. It must be executed like a *strike-throug*h and not as a surface slap; think of having your hands meet in the middle. Well-executed, this technique will cause searing pain and a loss of balance. Follow up though.



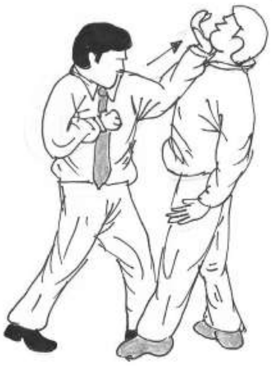
The very efficient Twin Ear Slap; keep your Retzev going after that

Applied Twin Ears Palm Strike against a bear hug attempt from the front



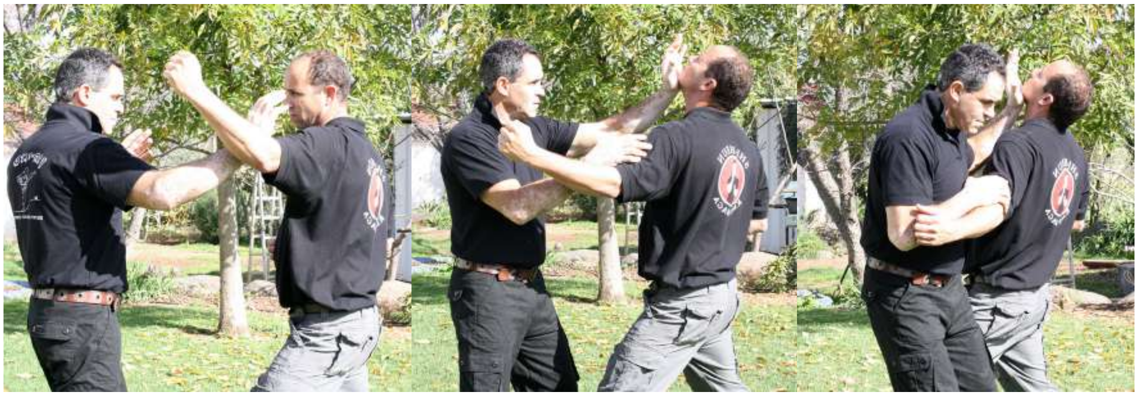
Applied Twin ears Strike against a choking attempt from the front

An important variation of the straight Palm Strike is the **upward attack of the chin**. The vector is diagonally upwards in order to catch the chin and strike it up. This also causes harm to the cervical vertebrae; a very powerful and brusque strike can be crippling or even lethal. ***CAUTION IS WARRANTED!***

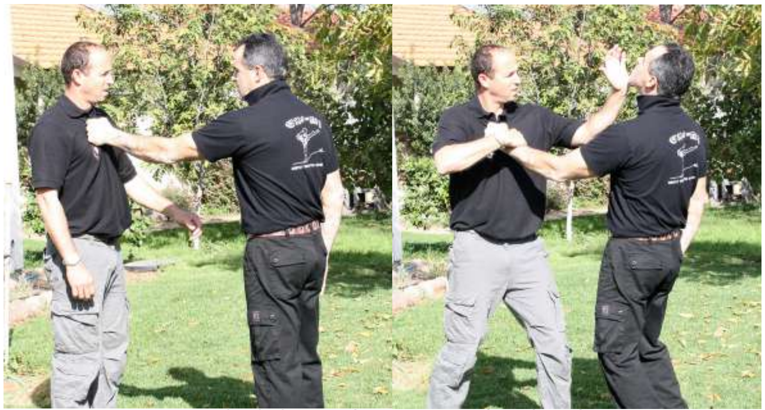


The Upward Palm Strike to the chin: a dangerous strike

Same attack in Photo; look at the neck



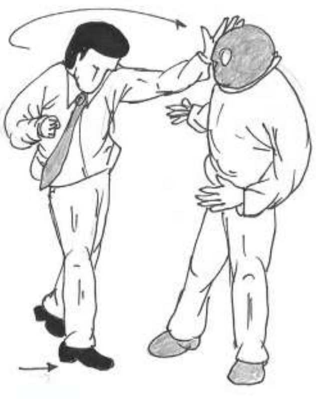
Applied chin strike against a Haywire Punch or an Overhead Strike; look at the naturally-flowing follow-up: an Outer Reap Takedown



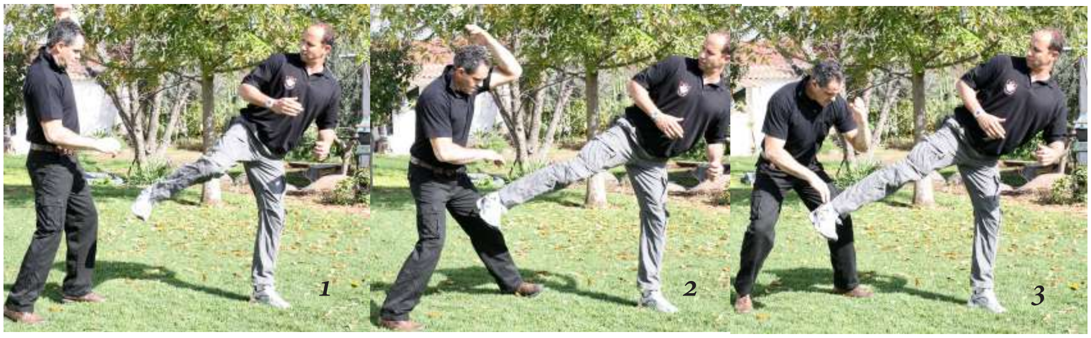
Applied chin strike against a lapel grab

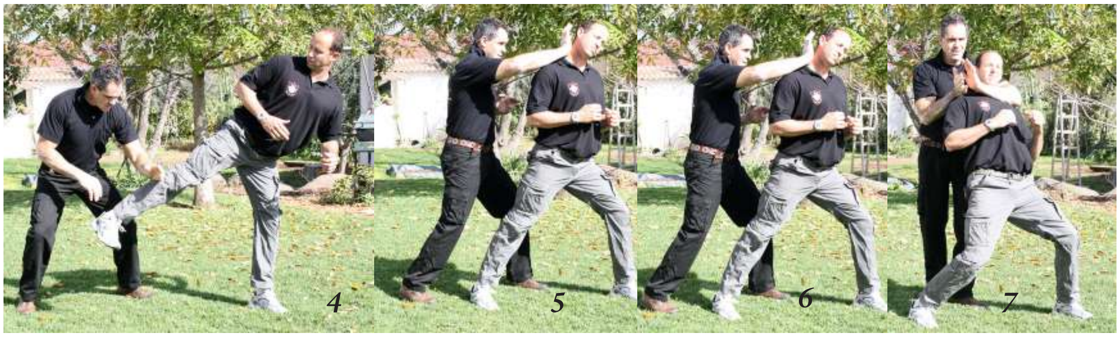
Hit the chin up and through, then push down; Marc on Serge Coucke in the 1970ies

Of Course, a direct Palm Strike to other soft targets can be as efficient, especially if the assailant is going or falling into the strike. See example below. Aim for the **ear** and strike a few inches *into* the target.



Slightly curved direct Strike to the opponent's ear or temporal area; use the hip twist for power

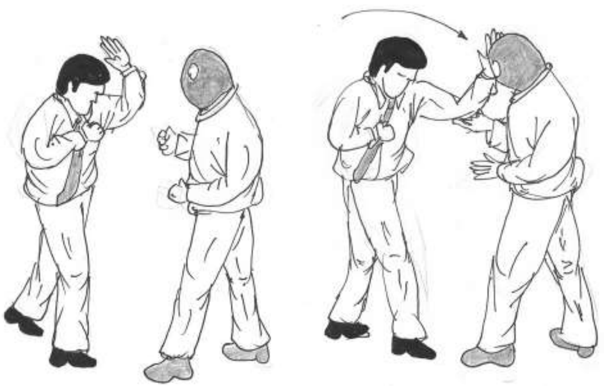




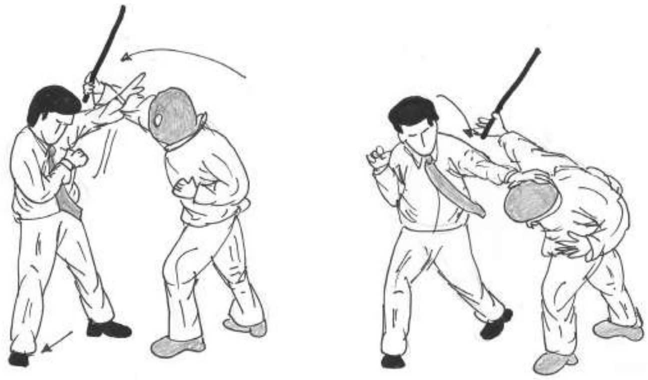
Evade and strike down a Low Side Kick, palm-strike the side of the attacker's face, and flow into a Rear Naked Choke

A very different type of Palm Strike, but surprisingly efficient, is the simple **Slap**! Yes, slap him! Of course, it is not a surface strike like the common slap. It is, in fact, the Palm version of a Hook Punch, or a Swing punch: it is a relatively circular attack that uses the whole body to strike *through* the opponent's head. This maneuver is fast, surprising and punishing. It requires some training to become efficient and familiar: drill on the heavy bag and on focus pads held by a partner.

➤

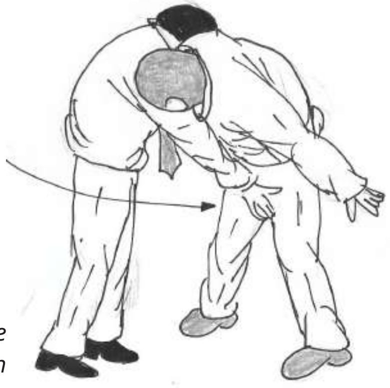


The Slap: surprisingly efficient

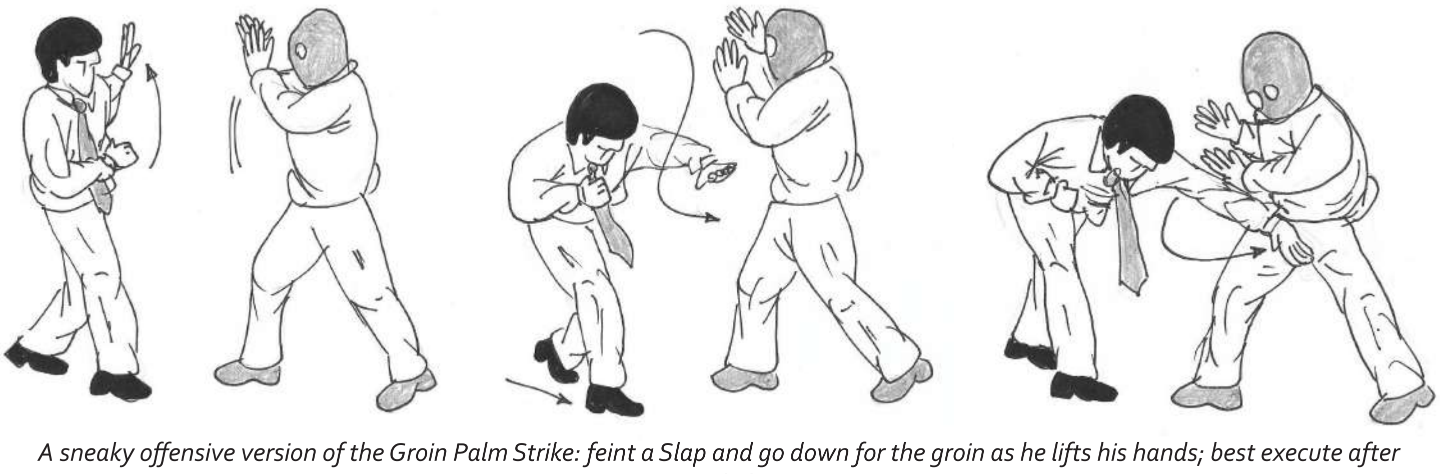


An applied Slap: look at the full use of the body to strike through

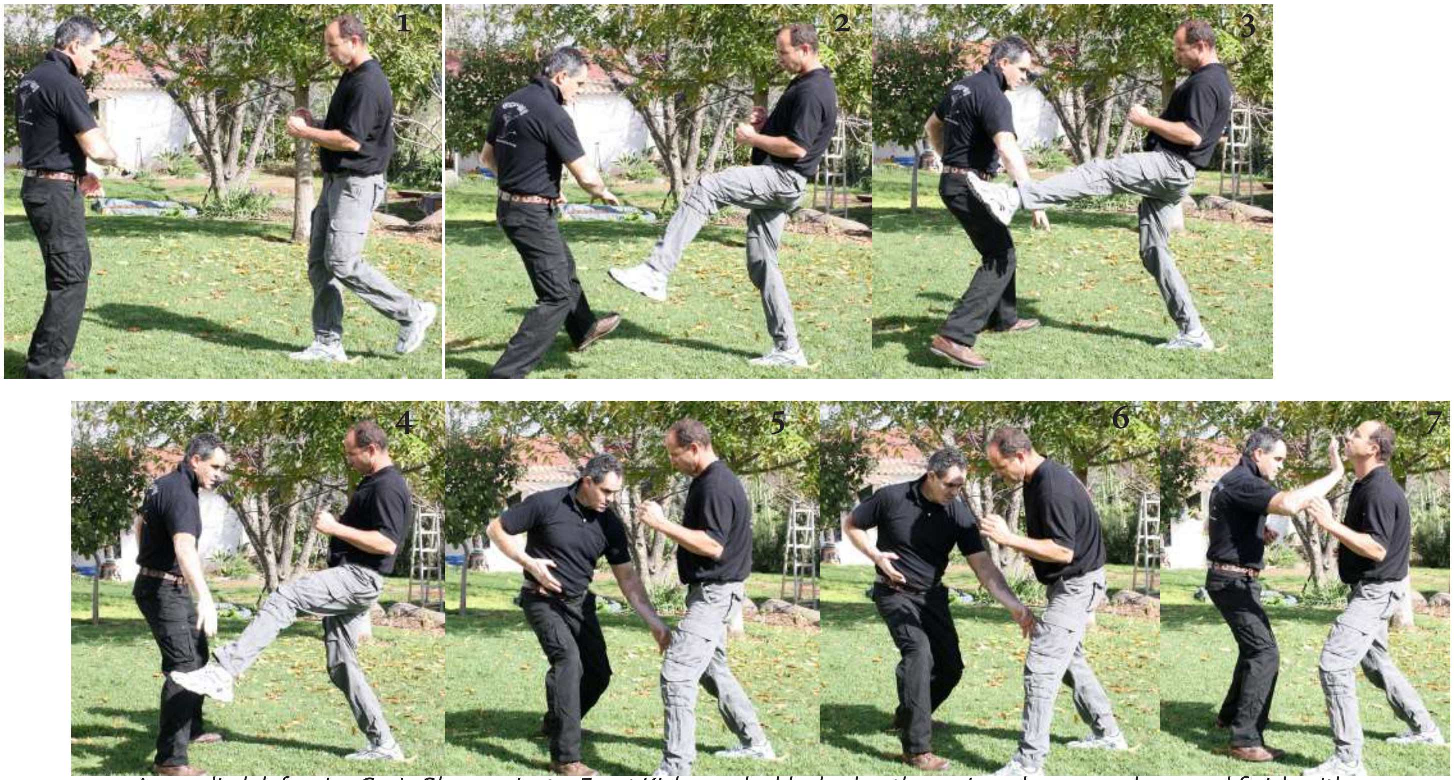
There are many other Palm Strikes, but *Krav Maga* does focus only on the most effective and most naturally-flowing in stress situations. The last technique presented here is certainly *Krav Maga-worthy*: it is the **Palm Groin Strike**! Strike the opponent's groin upwards with your open hand, but make sure you strike up and *through* the target: train to *not* make this a 'surface slap'. After the strike, you can then grab his genitals if clothing permits.



The Groin Palm Strike; use it any time you are in a suitable position



A sneaky offensive version of the Groin Palm Strike: feint a Slap and go down for the groin as he lifts his hands; best execute after one or more real Slap attempts



An applied defensive Groin Slap against a Front Kick: evade, block, slap the groin as he comes down and finish with a straight Palm to the face

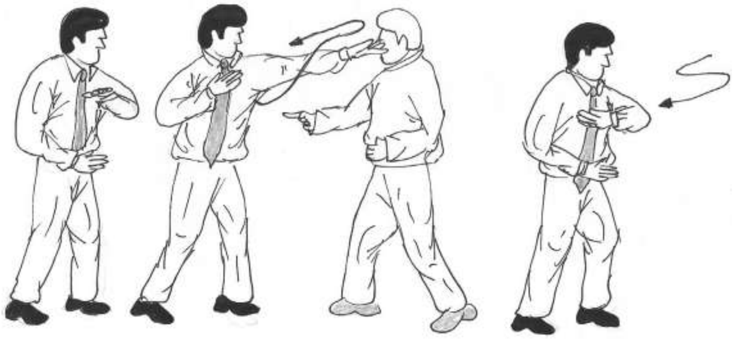
3.7 The Eyes Attacks

The eyes are a basically *the second-best target after the groin*. It is quite obvious why. There are two things the reader should bear in mind though. First, not everybody is psychologically able to poke, rake or claw somebody else's eyes. There is a strong educational, squeamish and moral barrier to cross. You should think about it seriously and drill safe strikes in order to get familiar with the idea that you could have no choice but do it. The second point is that there are ethical and legal considerations to take into account: this kind of technique should only be used proportionally and when you are truly attacked with no possibility of retreat (and have no other choice to protect your physical integrity). Therefore, to sum it up: get used to the idea, but try to avoid it.

There are ***3*** basic ways to attack an assailant's eyes. In order of seriousness: the Whip, the Rake and the Poke.

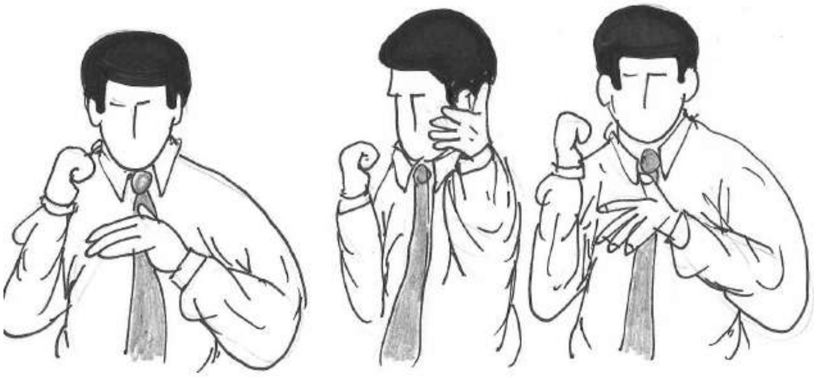
3.7.1 The Eye Whip is a very important technique that must be mastered by all serious '*Kravists*'. It can be used in most situations because it is more a Feint or a Combination Opener than a crippling strike. That does not mean that it is not dangerous, but it is more likely to cause reparable damage than the next Eye Strikes. In any case, it is guaranteed to cause a violent and atavistic combined reaction: *closing the eyes, lifting the hands and pulling the head back*. Of course, this opens your opponent to a multitude of follow-ups, especially towards the groin.

The advantage of the **Eye Whip** is its speed, because of the way it is executed (with muscles totally relaxed). The Principle behind it is true 'whipping'. Think about a whipping towel strike, of the kind going on in teen-agers cloakrooms: you throw the towel you are holding by a corner forward and as the opposite corner reaches the target, you violently pull it back like a true whip. It cracks and liberates a lot of energy at the far corner. You will now do the same thing with your arm: your relaxed fingers are the striking corner, and your flexed elbow is the 'held' corner. With muscles completely relaxed, you extend the arm and throw your totally relaxed fingers towards the opponent's eyes (their trajectory is direct but naturally curved by the straightening of the arm). As soon as your fingers touch his eyes and face, you pull them back brusquely and fast to their starting position, trying to make them 'crack' like a whip. It is easier to understand by doing than by reading: get a towel first, try a few times and then try to mimic with your arm. Concentrate on speed and on pullback. This move requires some training and familiarization, but it is surprisingly easy. Drill for speed and use it whenever possible. The movement is similar to the fast Backfist of non-contact Karate (*Uraken Uchi*), just with an open hand and loose fingers. You can drill with that in mind 'against a hanging towel or a focus pad. You should also drill in front of a mirror for explosiveness and non-telegraphing.

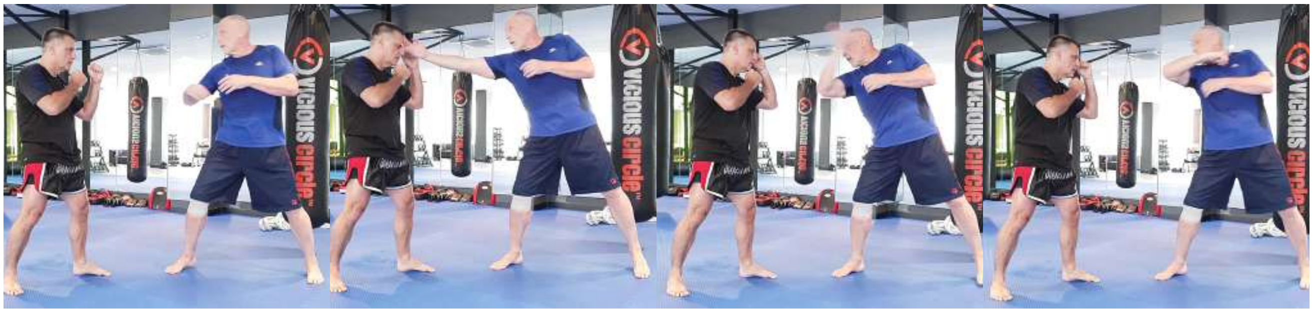


The Eye Whip: make it fast and untelegraphed

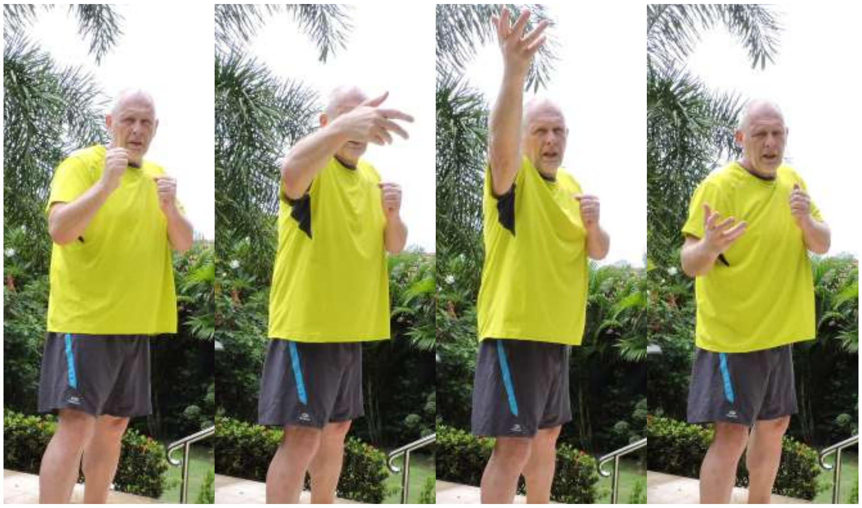
The well-known Whipping Towel Principle



Front View of the Eye Whip: pull back fast

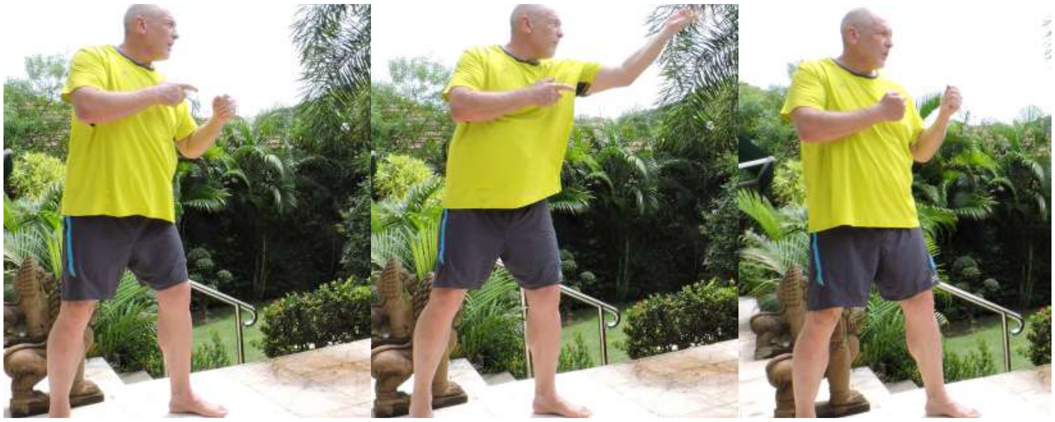


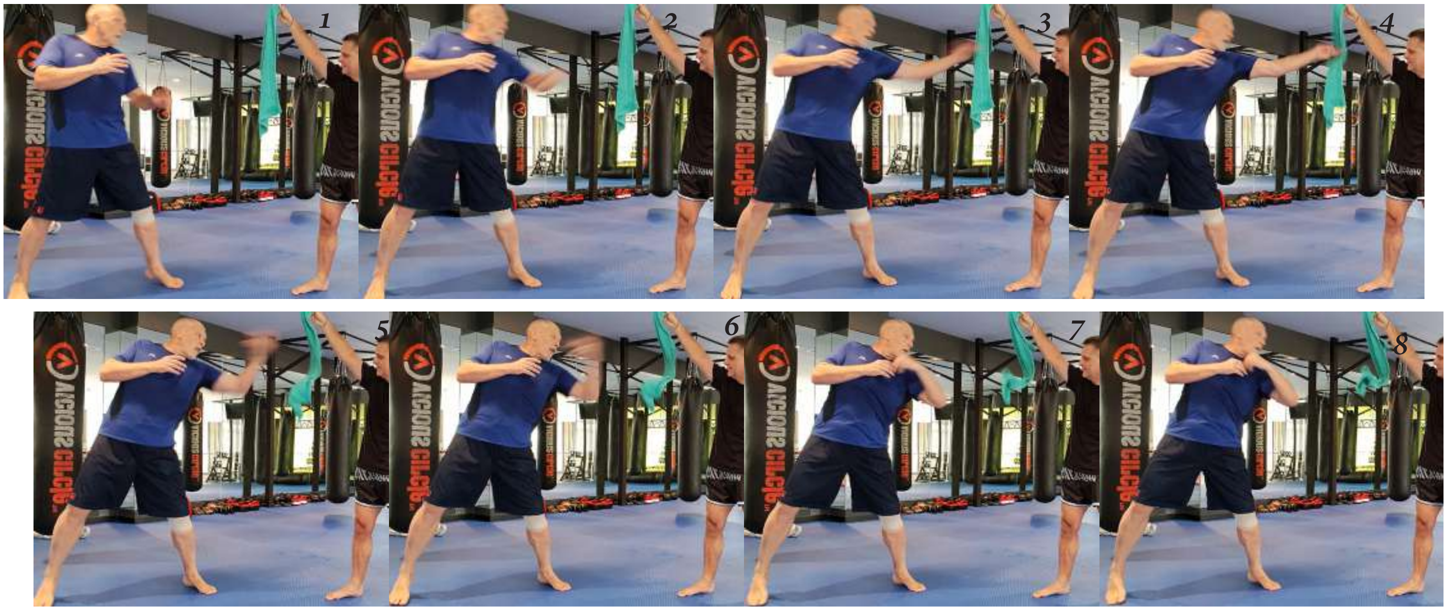
The Whip, from a video recording



The Eye Whip: fast and relaxed

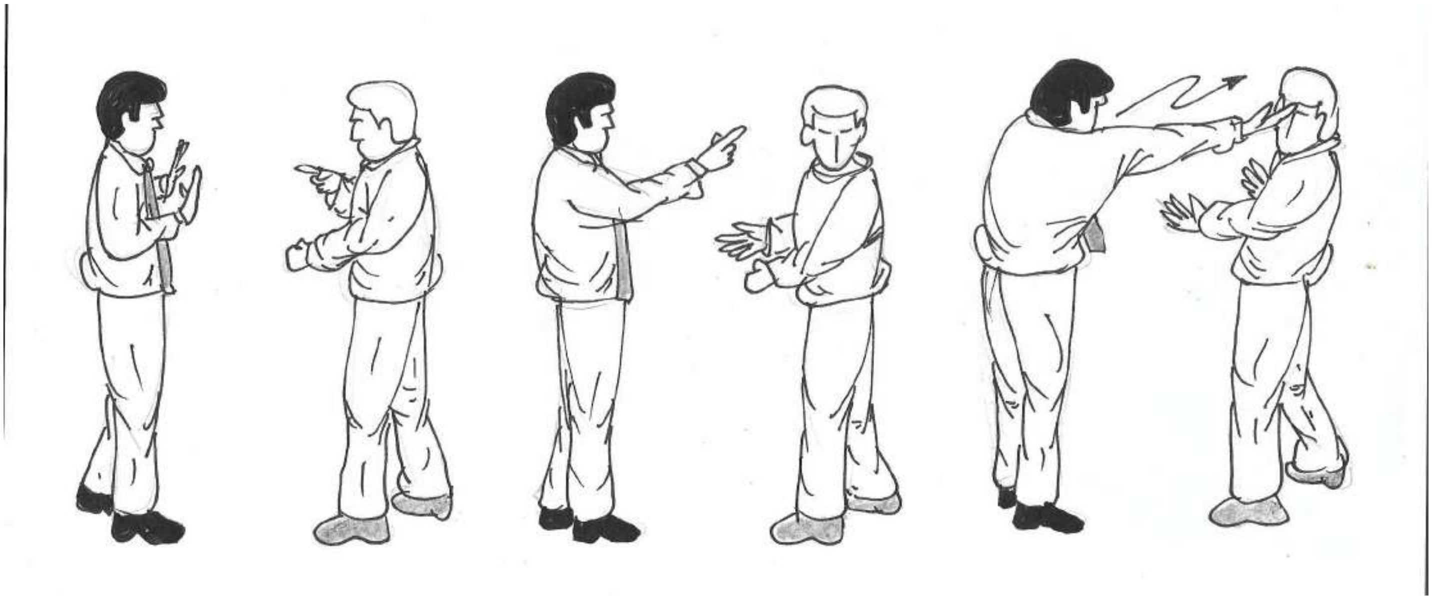
Side view of the fast Eye Whip





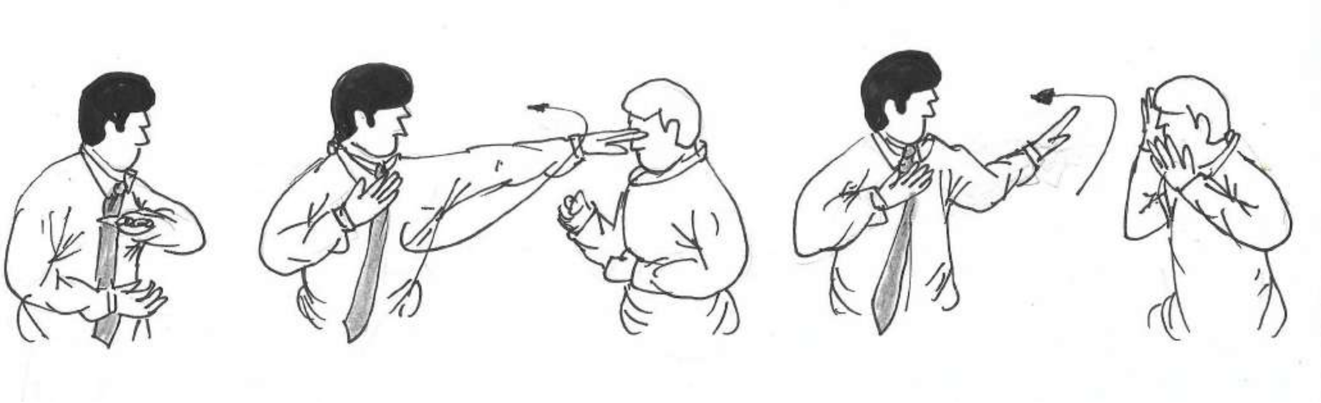
Eye Whip Training with a towel

The Eye Whip can be used in the midst of your *Retzev*, in combinations and to help close the gap to your opponent. But it is especially suitable *for the start of a preemptive strike*, whether the is just starting an attack or if he is only gearing himself for it. If it is clear that violence is going to break out and if you do not have the possibility to walk away, go for it! You can start with a diversion, like looking and pointing behind the opponent; you can even call out to an imaginary person behind him. He'll have to look back, even for a millisecond. Whip his eyes immediately as he turns his head back towards you, and start your *Retzev*.



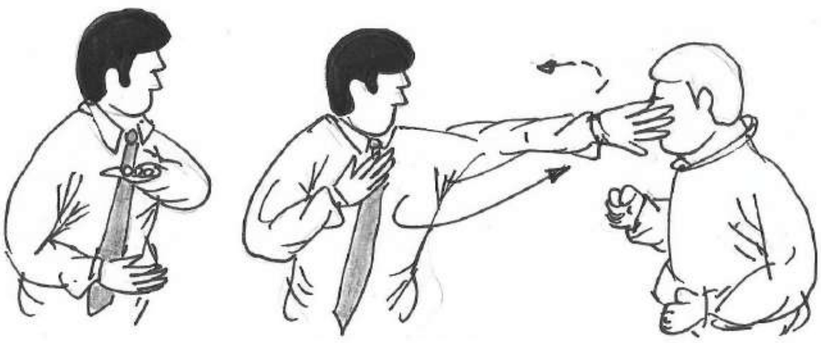
Cause the opponent to check behind him, and whip his eyes as he looks back to you

3.7.2 The Eye Rake is a more aggressive technique, and slightly slower. In this maneuver, you attack the opponent's eyes with the tips of your fingers horizontally from the inside outwards. It is as if you are trying to cause a horizontal scratch on his corneas. The move is slightly slower than the Eye Whip because your muscles cannot be completely loose. You extend the front arm to your in-side so that the fingers are a few inches to the side of his eyes and you go horizontally to the other side of his face, touching his eyes on the way. In the classic execution, your palm is facing the floor. It is pretty simple; just be economical in movement, and make sure you do not telegraph you intention to move.

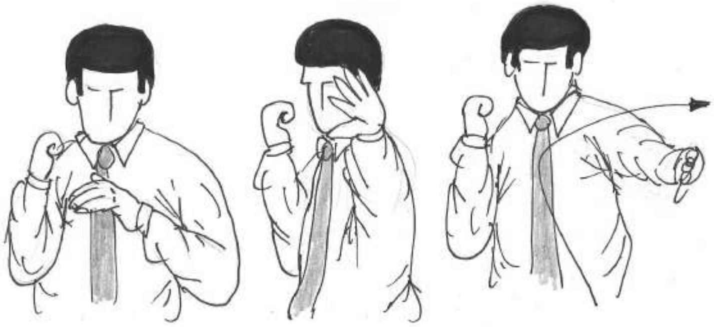


The orthodox Eye Rake: scratch his eyes in a short horizontal move

There is a drawback with this technique: if you go deep into his eyes or if he blocks even partially, you could get your fingers hurt. The technique is a fast *surface strike* on his eyes; if your fingertips meet something more solid, the fingers joints get jolted sideways, which is not their natural range. And remember that you are to use this technique in a stress situation in which you could lack precision. A preferred embodiment of this technique is presented below: while you extend the arm towards his eyes, *you also turn your hand to have your thumb pointing down*. The horizontal rake is identical, but if your fingers hit something hard, they'll just bend backwards a little. This version is less natural than the orthodox move, and therefore, it needs drilling. Train in front of a mirror and drill on a marked heavy bag or o focus pad held by a partner at eye level. Then work speed on a hanging towel.

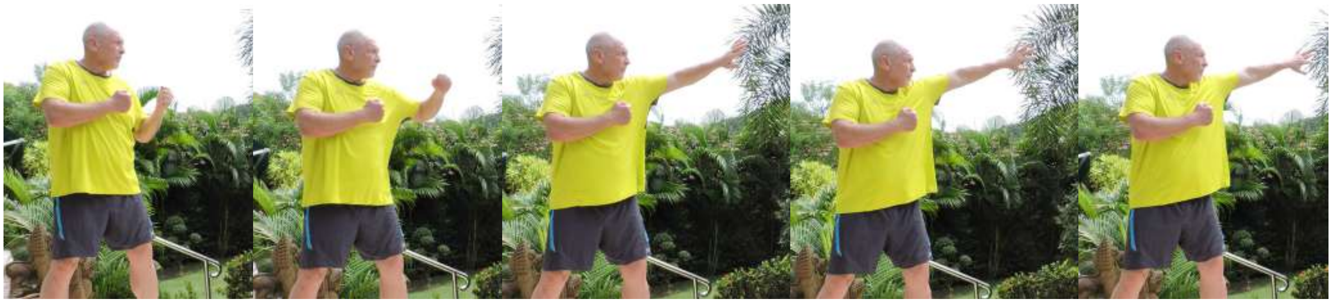


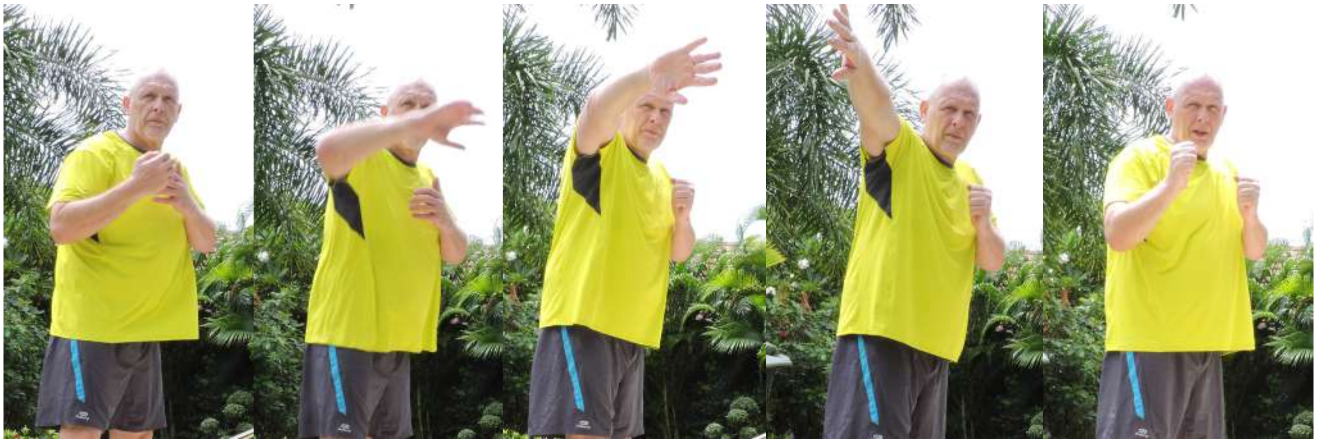
The preferred version of the Eye Rake



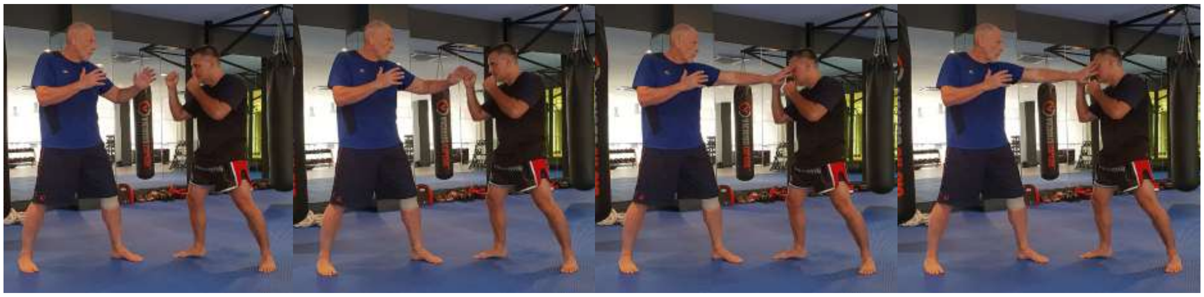
Front view of the improved Eye Rake

Side view of the optimal Eye Rake

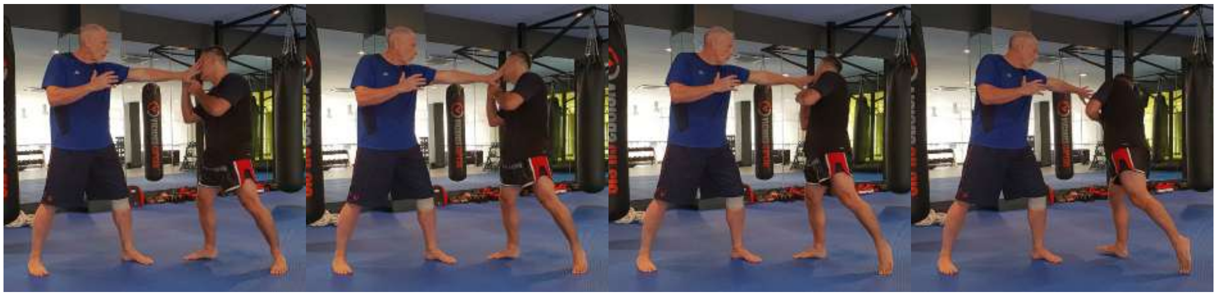


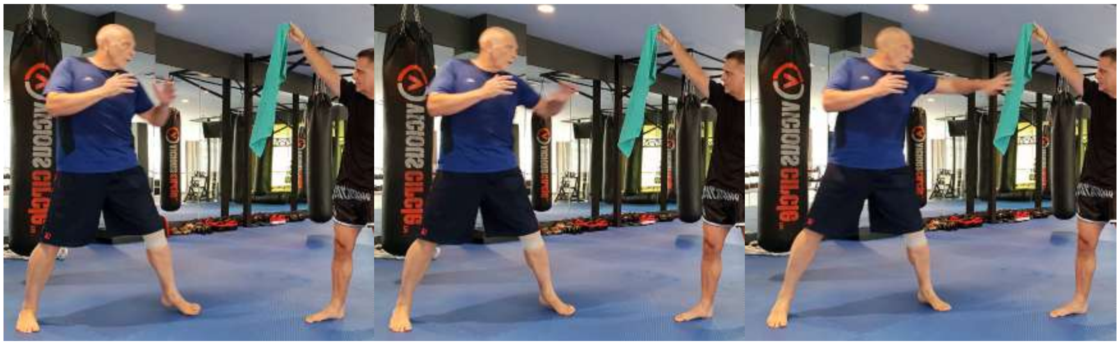


Front view of the rake: lighting fast and easy

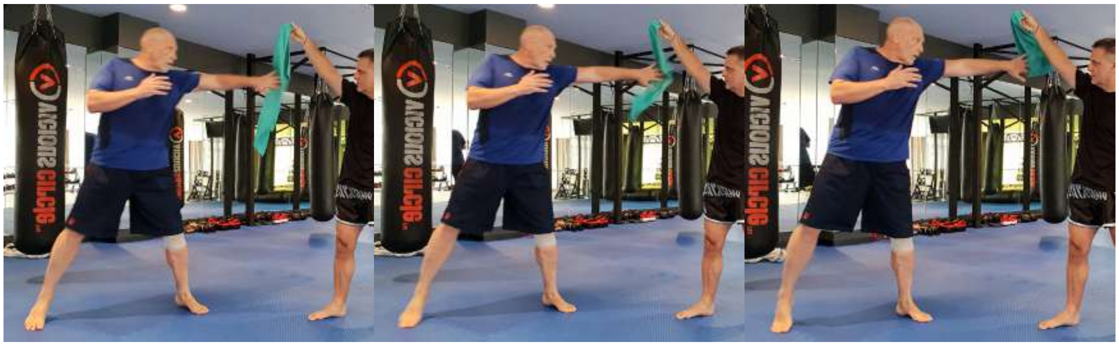


The orthodox Eye Rake with partner

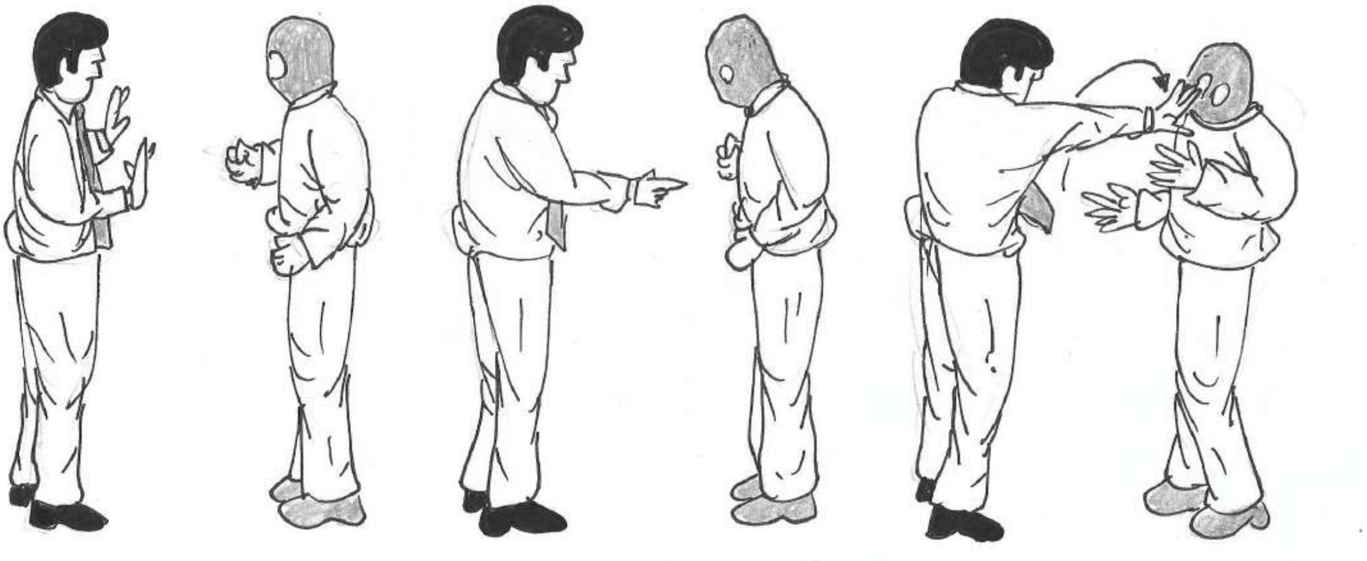




Improved Eye Rake move - training with towel for explosive speed



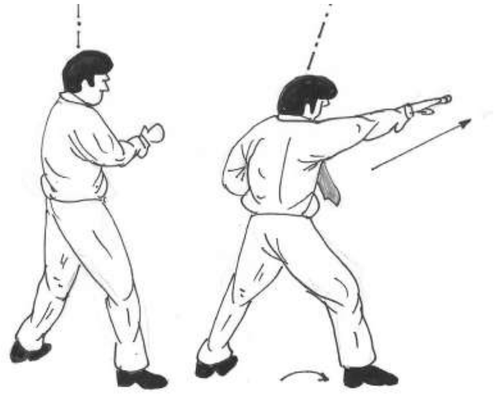
The Eye Rake is, again, a great combination-opener or preemptive strike. You can use the same preparatory diversion presented for the Eye Whip. Or you can suddenly start shouting to startle him before launching. Or, as illustrated below, you can point at his midsection to distract him, and start the move *directly from this hand position*.



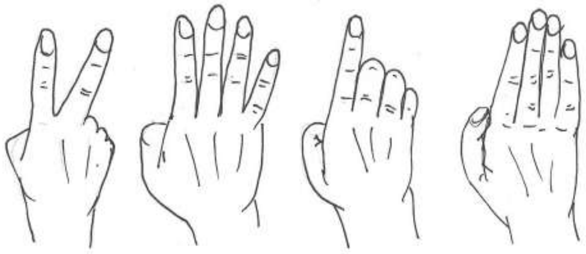
What is this? Bam!

3.7.3 The Eye Poke is simply a straight strike to the eyes with the stiffened fingers. Just like a Jab, you extend your arm fast to hit his eyeballs with one or several fingers. You can strike *fast* because no power is really necessary, and even shallow penetration into the target will cause serious damage; and in any case, it will allow you to follow up. **This is a dangerous technique to be used only in situations justifying it. Be careful in training as well.**

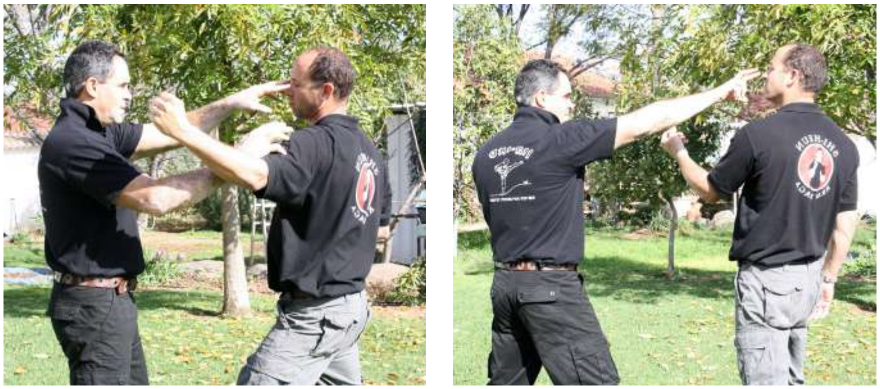
There are several ways to use your fingers to poke: the 2-fingers fork, the 5 spread fingers, the 1 finger poke and the 4 fingers hand-spear. There is no need to go into details: use what suits your personality and habits; just poke and follow up. The only thing to add is that you need to familiarize yourself with the impact on your fingertips: drill hitting soft targets with your stiffened fingers. You need to get used to it and get the feeling (No need to drill in sand buckets and get calluses like in some traditional Martial Arts).



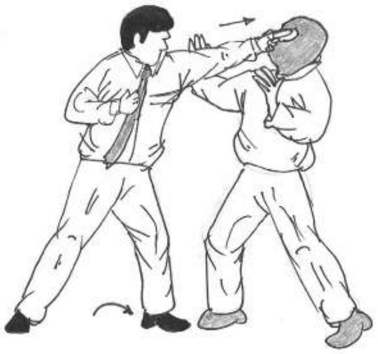
The Eye Poke is delivered fast like a Jab; here a spread-fingers open hand



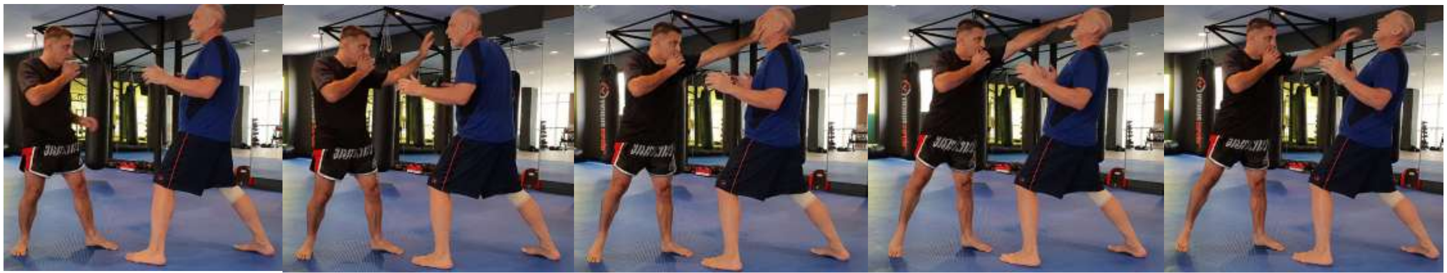
The various fingers set-ups for poking



The 2 Fingers-fork version of the Eye Poke



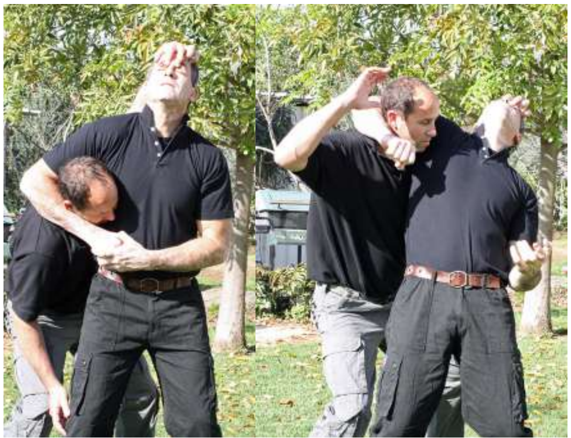
The 1-finger Eye Poke



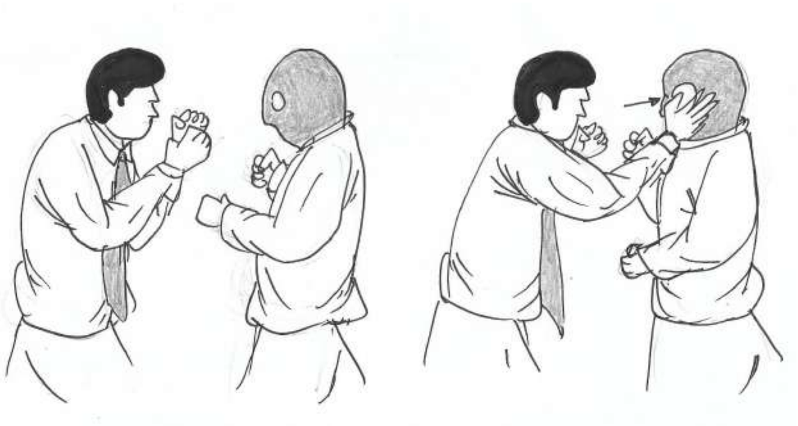
The 5 Spread Fingers Poke - Claw Style

Towel-Drilling the Poke for explosive speed

One could add to the various fingers set-ups the use of the thumb and the clawing of the eyes. These are more close-up techniques for grappling, used for holds and grabs releases. They are trivial and presented in context when necessary. They are not striking techniques to be used from some distance, with the exception of thumbing in certain circumstances.



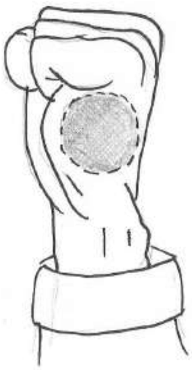
Applied Eye Clawing in a Release; not a strike!



Thumbing the eye from some distance; go fast, no need for power

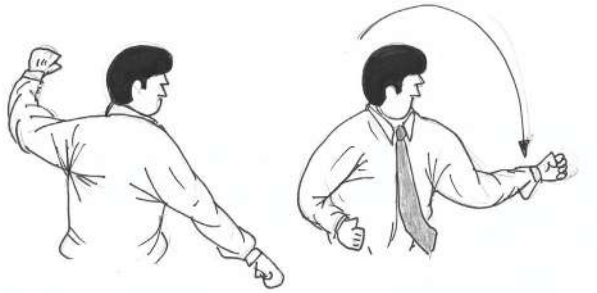
3.8 The Hammer-fist

Hammer-fist Strikes are, generally-speaking, very similar to Hand Blade Strikes. They are more powerful (mass of the fist) and safer for the fingers. Therefore, if the target is not narrow and does not require the edge of an open hand, close the fist and do exactly the same movement. Impact is with the fleshy part of the bottom of the hand.

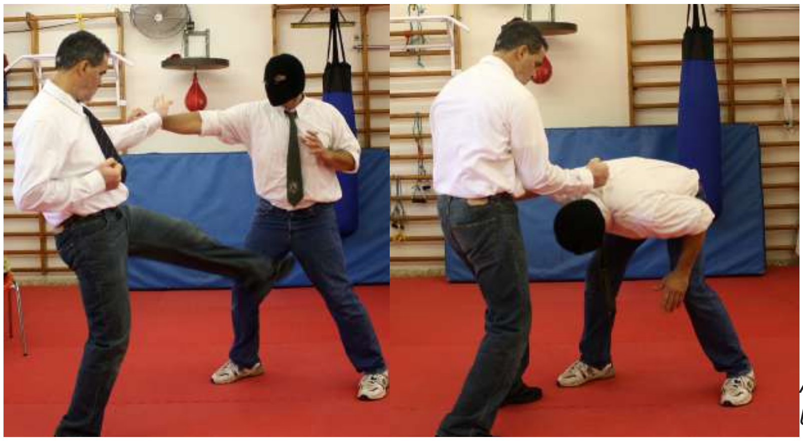


The Hammer-fist Strikes relevant to Krav Maga are: the Downward Strike, the Outward Strike, the Straight Strike and the Hammer-fist Punch.

3.8.1 The Downward Hammer-fist Strike is executed just like the Hand-sword Strike, but with the fist closed. It is usually targeting the back of the neck of a bent-over opponent or the clavicle. It can also be used to attack a limb or the throat (if it is exposed by pulling his head back).

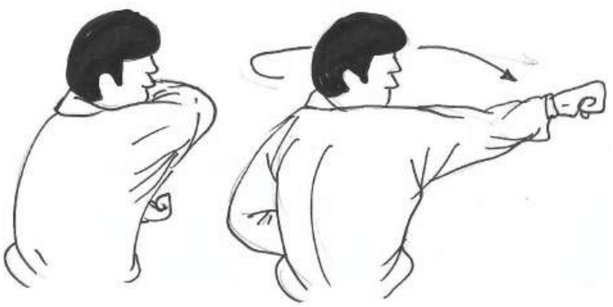


The Downward Hammer-fist Strike



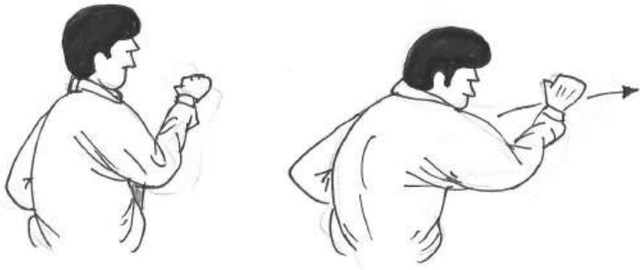
Applied Downward Hammer-fist to the back of the neck

3.8.2 The Outward Hammer-fist Strike is exactly like its Sword-hand counterpart. It is used to attack the opponent's nose if he is sideways, or the side of his head. It is usually not suitable to attack the throat or the side of the neck, because the fist is too big to get there cleanly. But the Strike is very powerful because it is powered by the hips, and it can also be used on the body: solar plexus, floating ribs, kidneys.

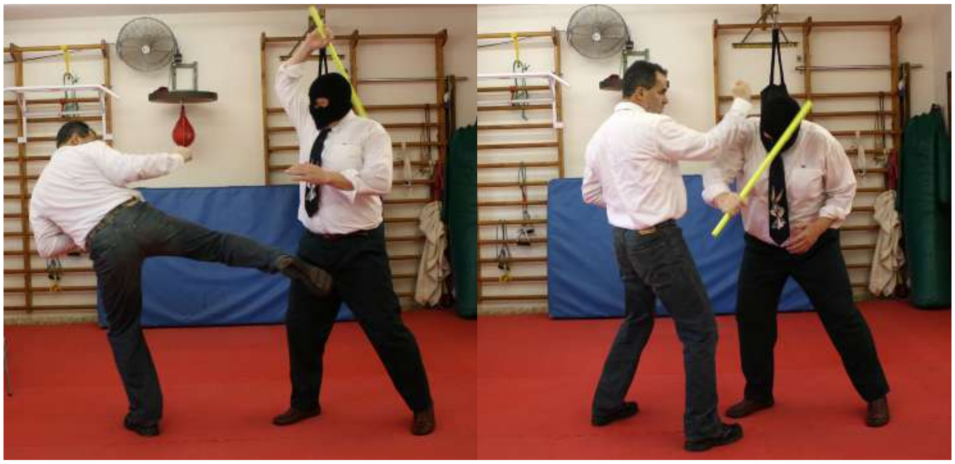


The powerful Outward Hammer-fist Strike: the closed-fist version of the Hand-sword Strike

3.8.3 The Straight Hammer-fist Strike is simply the closed-fist version of the Forward Knife-hand Strike presented earlier. The Hand travels *nearly straight* towards the opponent's nose and connects with the 'hammer-fist' part. Simple and straightforward, but it always needs to be followed up. It is not the most practical attack in its orthodox form presented here, but it is worth drilling for a fast response. The better option will be the Hammer-fist Punch presented just after.

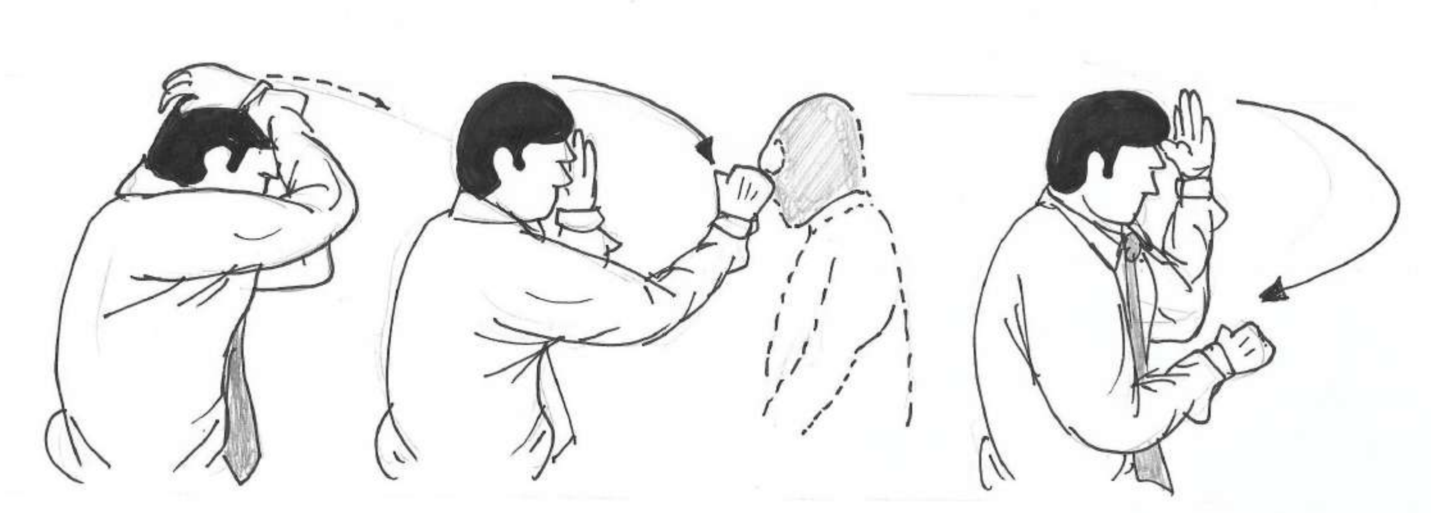


The Straight Hammer-fist Strike

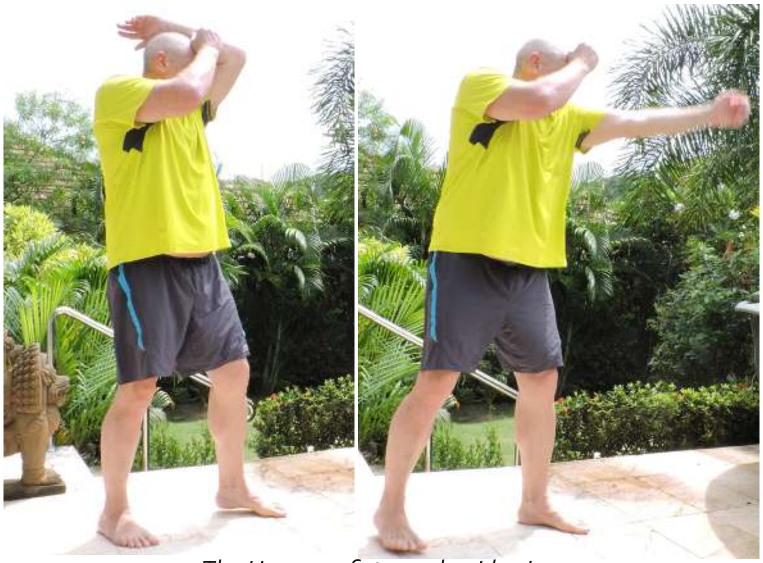


Applied Hammer-fist

3.8.4 The Hammer-fist Punch is a very important technique. It is a hybrid between the Downward and the Straight Hammer-fist Strikes. It is more powerful than the Straight version and much less telegraphed than the Downward version. But its importance resides on its exploding directly from a natural high covering guard. When attacked with punches, you will instinctively will lift your arms to cover and protect your head. From this position, you will strike directly without lowering the hand first to a regular guard position from which a jab usually starts. Striking directly is both fast and surprising. Lowering your striking hand first takes time and exposes your intentions. Instead, you will extend your hand directly towards the opponent's nose in a flattened arc. Punch the nose but keep going and drive your fist to a classic guard position. *It is not a surface hit*: strike **into** the nose for an inch, but keep going through. This is a very surprising strike, and surprisingly effective too. It needs drilling for familiarization (on the heavy bag and on focus pads), but once mastered, it is pretty easy to use.

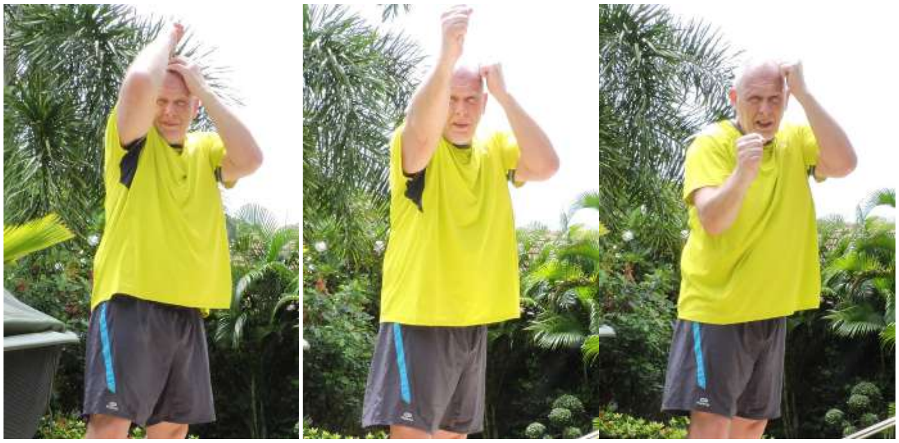


The fantastic Hammer-fist Punch, directly from the Covered Guard position

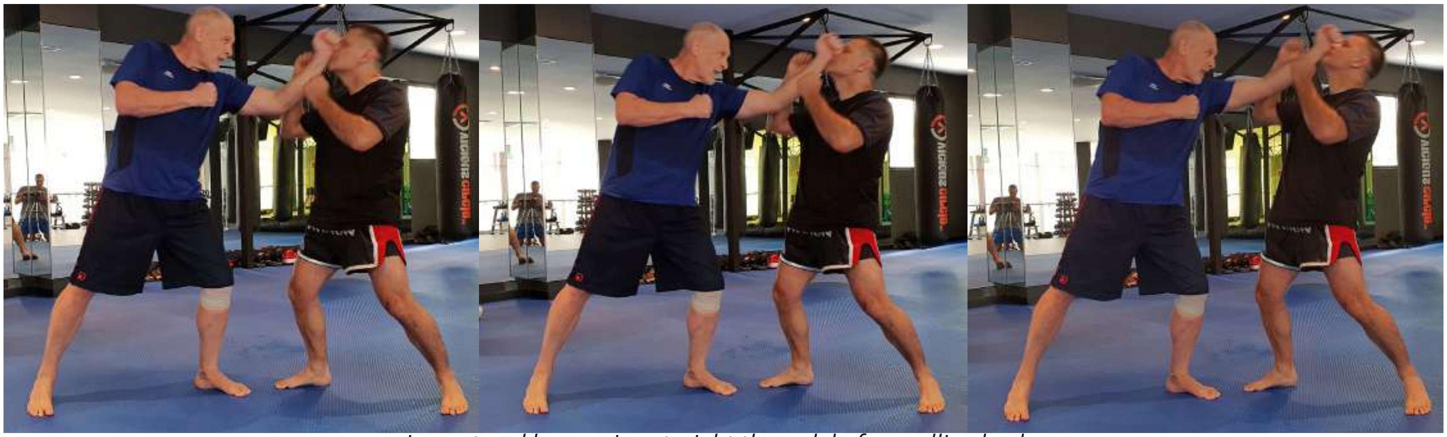


The Hammer-fist punch- side view

Target the nose!

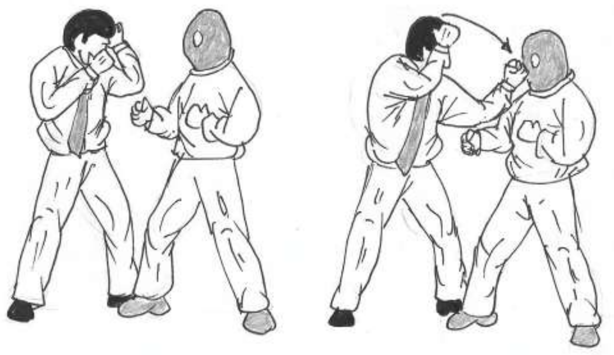


Front view of the Hammer-fist Punch; straight from the covered 'helmet' guard

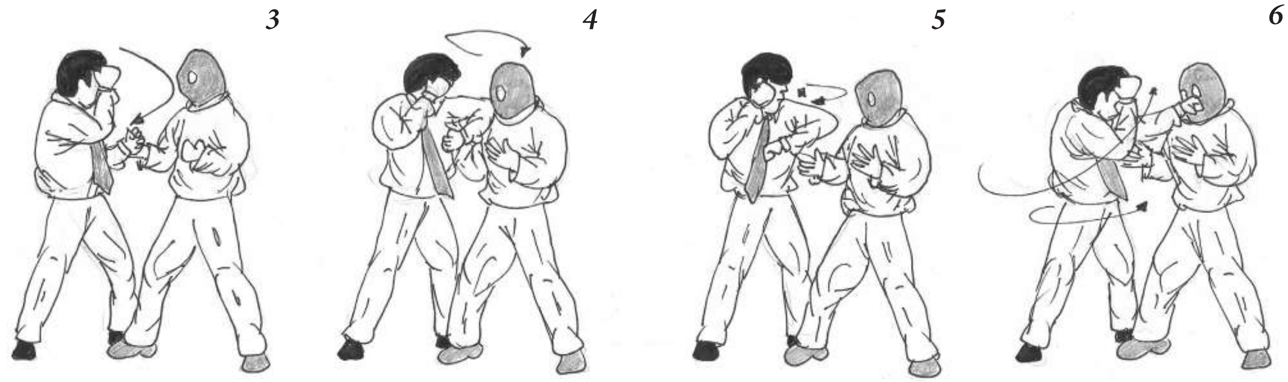


Impact and keep going straight through before pulling back

This fantastic little technique lends itself to a multitude of naturally-flowing follow-ups, in the spirit of *Retzev*. One possible option is presented below. Design your own and drill it for familiarization.



The Hammer-fist Punch, smoothly followed by a Circular Elbow and an Outward Hammer-fist; everything with the same front arm

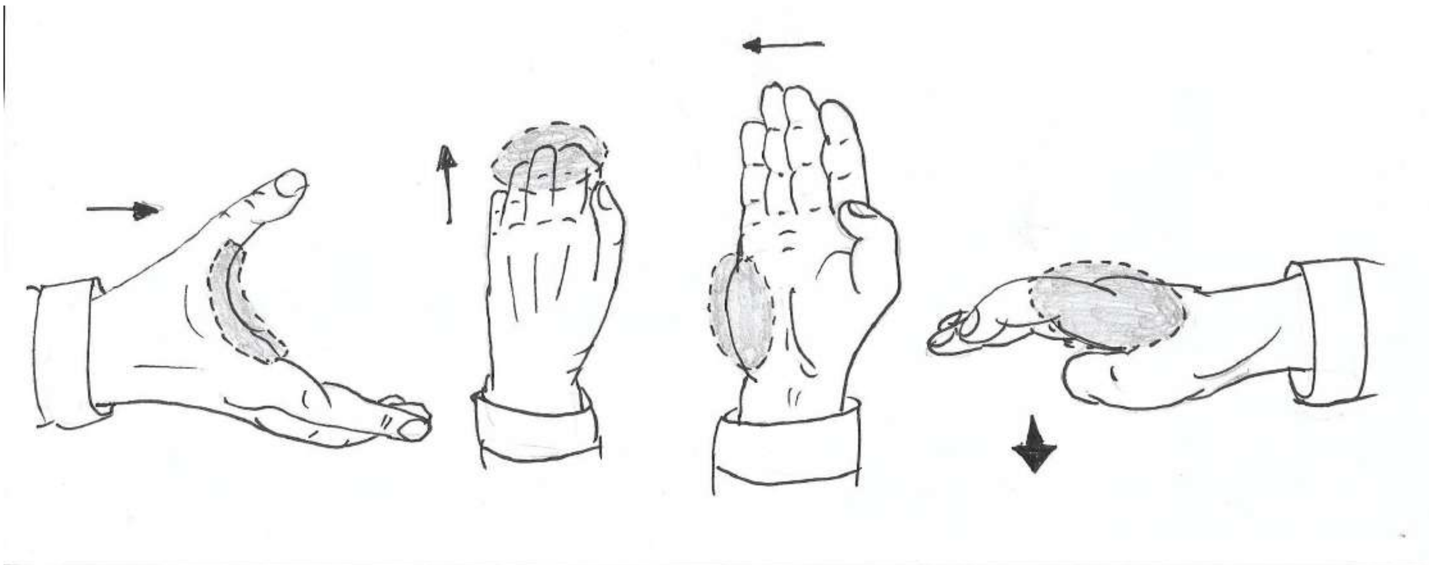


3.9 The Throat Attacks

The **throat** is a secondary target, ranking in importance with the groin and the eyes. Striking the throat is potentially debilitating and even potentially lethal. A controlled attack will cause difficulty to breathe and enough pain to stop the fight. Drill carefully and use only in serious circumstances. The throat can be attacked from any angle possible and with any suitable hand configuration; it is sensitive enough *to require more precision than power*.

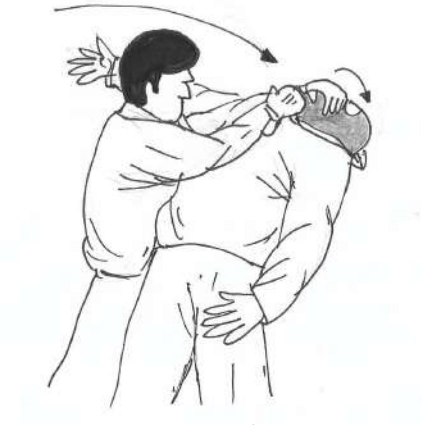
You can theoretically attack the throat with any of your natural weapons, but it is not always easy or practical. The preferred ways to attack the throat are presented in the Drawings at the top of next page:

- the '*mouth of the hand*' (the webbed part between the thumb and index fingers) which lends itself to following up with trachea pinching techniques.
- the '*leopard paw*' (the first knuckles of the three middle fingers) which is very hard but narrower than the fist.
- the *knife-hand* ('karate chop') for circular techniques.
- the *Ridge-hand* (opposite side of the Knife-hand) for circular attacks as well, with the thumb and index finger knuckles.



Natural weapons for attacking the throat

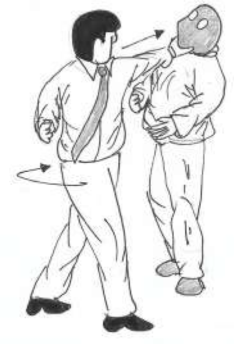
Other ways to attack the throat are valid in certain cases, but they require more concentration and more complicated approaches, which is not in line with the simplicity required by *Krav Maga* for use in stressful situations. For example, a regular Punch to the throat will be very efficient in dispatching the opponent; but most fighters keep their chin down to protect both throat and chin, which makes access difficult. If the circumstances are right, you can either come with an upward punch or pull the opponent's head back (by the hair or the eyes to 'open' the throat. The coming Figure shows such an 'opening' of the throat for the delivery of a Hammer-fist Strike in a similar technique. The use of the stiffened fingers to strike straight with the tips of the fingers requires impact training not in line with the KISS principle of *Krav Maga*. You can even use a Kick to attack the throat, as illustrated (In extreme cases, you can even stomp-kick the throat of the opponent thrown to the floor).



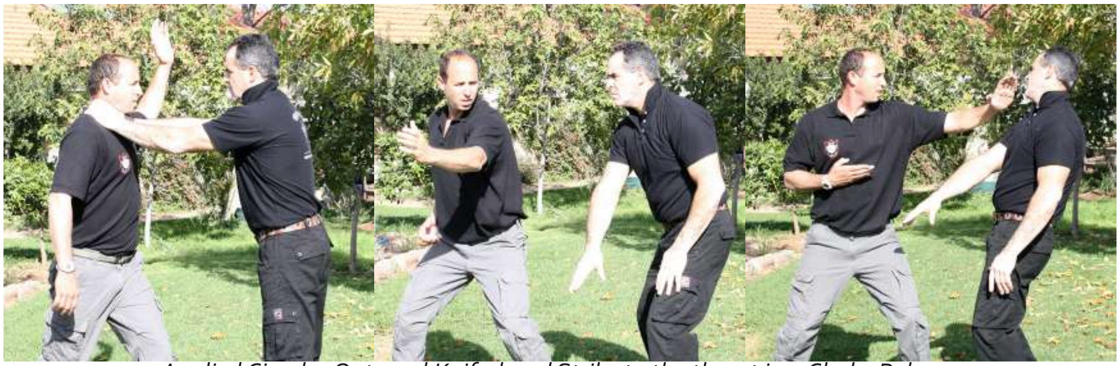
Downward Hammer-fist Strike to an exposed throat – use only in special circumstances

Side Kicks to the throat – requires lots of training and unnecessarily sophisticated for Krav Maga

It is therefore recommended to concentrate on the **4** hand configurations presented above and drill them for familiarization.

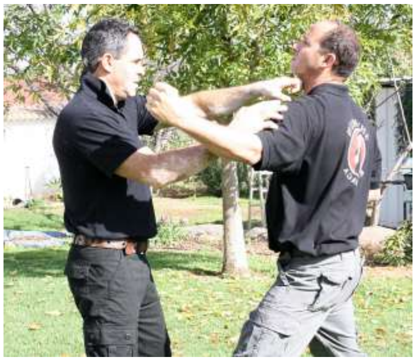


The 'Bear Mouth' Hand strike to the throat

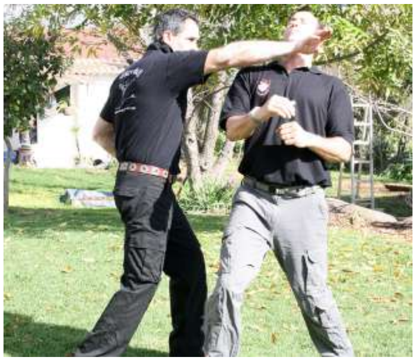


Applied Circular Outward Knife-hand Strike to the throat in a Choke Release

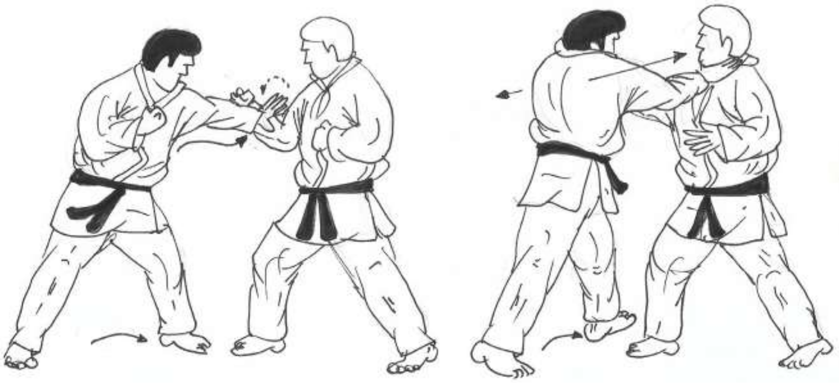
Leopard Paw 'punch' to the throat



Circular Ridge-hand Strike to the throat



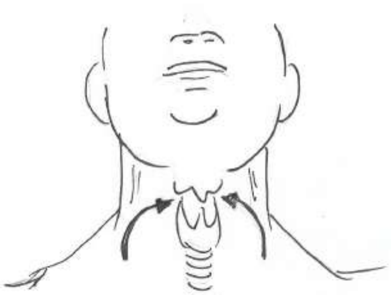
The 'Mouth of the Hand' straight Strike is highly recommended: it is natural, it is easy to perform, it can come diagonally up from down out-of-the-field-of-vision, and it lends itself to a mean trachea pinch follow-up. It can be delivered from the lead hand, as a jab, or from the rear hand as a cross. Get familiar and use it, but remember that it is a Strike, not a choke or a push. Hit fast and dry. Only after impact of *a few inches into the throat*, should you eventually start grabbing for a choking follow-up.



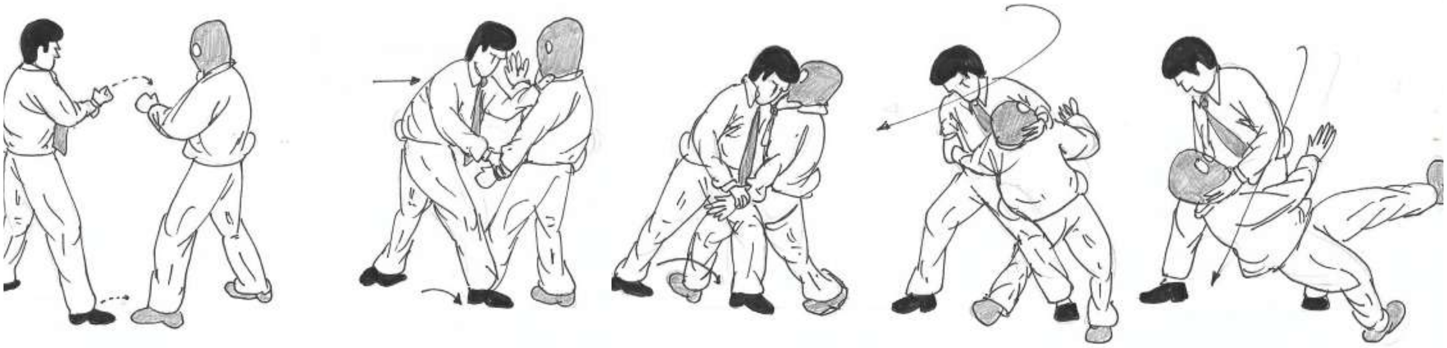
A full-powered 'Mouth of the hand' throat attack: pull him in by the grabbed wrist

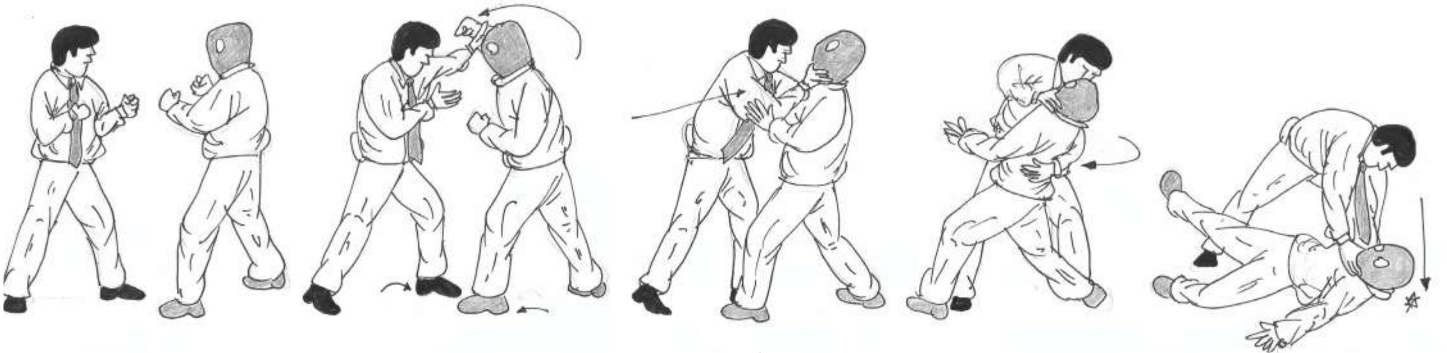
Only after you have mastered the technique as a dry 'punch', should you start drilling **the subsequent grabbing of the throat** for the mean follow-ups it allows.
These special and *very dangerous techniques* have to be drilled very carefully and used only in the direst of situations where your life, or that of your loved ones are in clear danger.

After impact, you should grip the opponent's trachea between your thumb and your other fingers. You are *not* to try to choke the whole neck by squeezing everything (including the carotids). It is simpler to try to pinch the larynx only by going in with your fingers as if trying to encircle it to pull it out. It is enough to squeeze the trachea itself to cause immense pain and difficulty to breathe. Squeeze only as much as the situation dictates; this is very dangerous, especially coming after the throat strike.

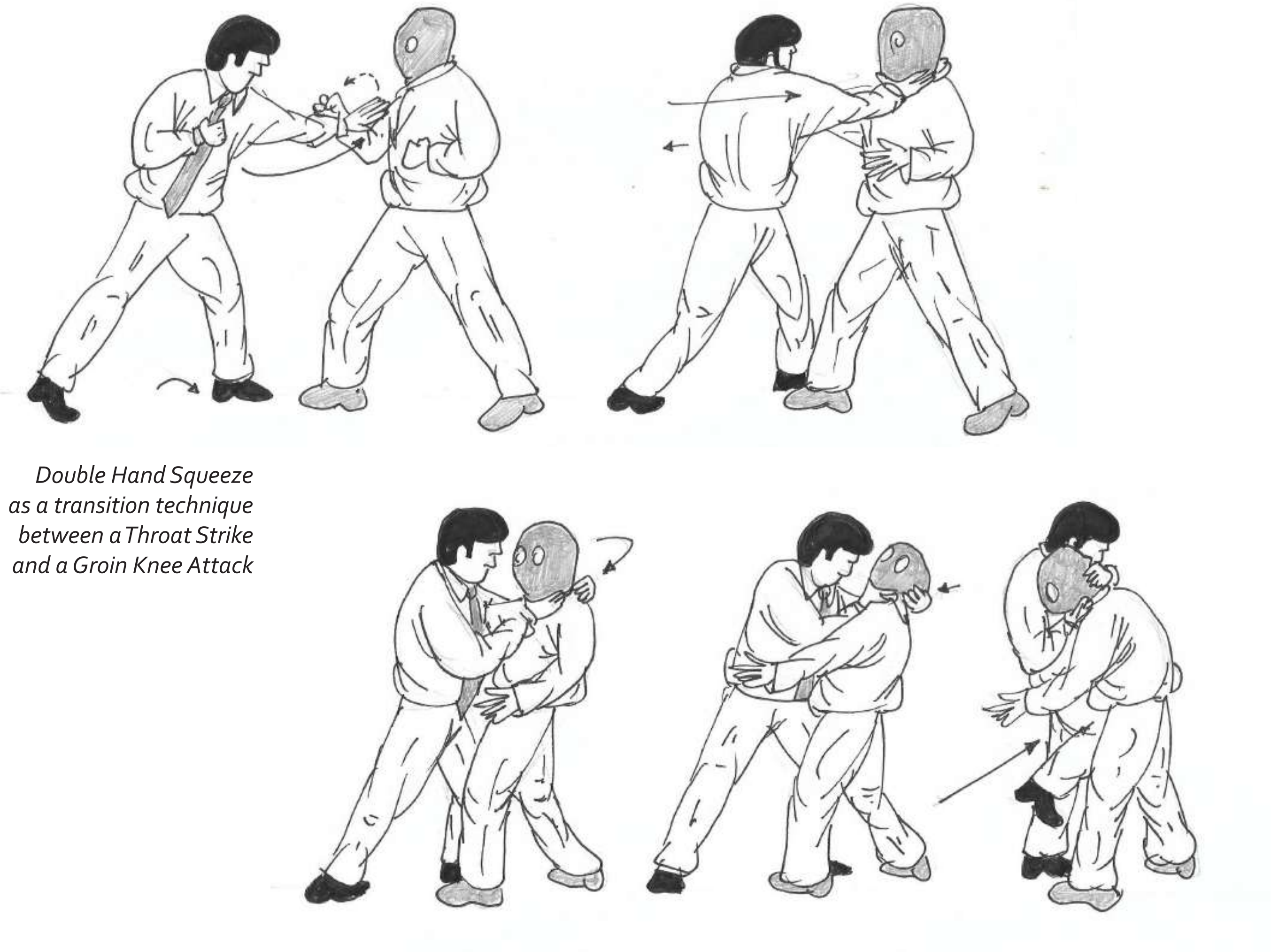

Try to pinch behind the Larynx Box

Once you have pinched the trachea, you have to prevent the opponent to pull out of the grab. You can do that by throwing him to the ground or by catching the back of his neck and pulling it forward into your grip.
You can take the opponent down by reaping his leg and twisting him into the throw by pushing his throat. See Illustrations below. You can also simply push his head straight down while holding his lower back to prevent him retreating (See second set of Figures). In both cases, you should use the technique *to slam his head to the ground*, not just to take him down [*If you have had to use a trachea pinch, it means that the circumstances were life-threatening*].


Throat Strike to Trachea Pinch to Outer Leg reaping Takedown


Throat Strike and Trachea Pinch on a Haywire Punch Defense; push his head directly down into the ground

If you do not want to take him down but rather to keep striking him, you should use the Trachea Pinch after the Throat Strike, *and immediately catch the back of his neck* to prevent his retreating. Pinch hard and squeeze the hands together for a painful maneuver, but keep striking. This is not a static technique like a choke, **but a dynamic transition**. The natural follow-up is one or several Knee Strikes to the groin, before you let go … to keep Striking.



Double Hand Squeeze as a transition technique between a Throat Strike and a Groin Knee Attack

When it comes to self defense, it is better to have the power and not need it than to need it and not have it.
~Kevin B. Shearer

vicious circle™

Part Four

The Kicks of Krav Maga

הבעיטות של קרב מגע

The Kicks of Krav Maga will be **simple** to execute in order to utilize the body natural reflexes to their maximum. **They will never be 'High Kicks'**, so as to remain safe and stable, and as to keep the groin protected. They will **target vulnerable points** only. That's it!

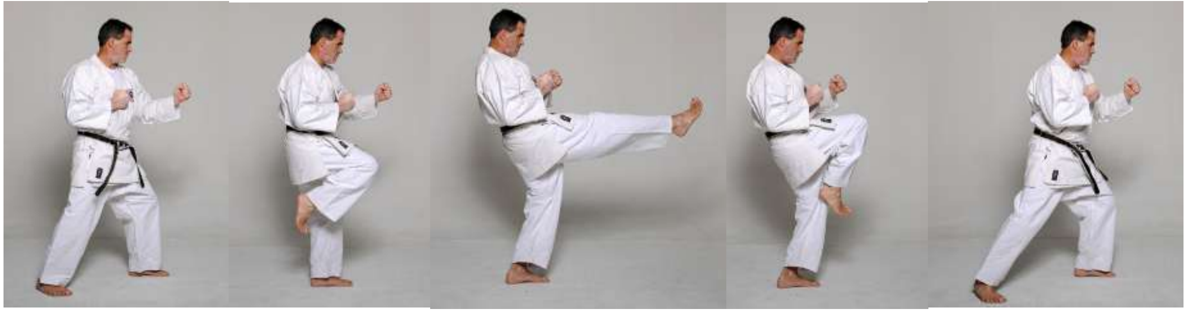
Again **KISS**! Keep It Simple, Stupid.

4.1. THE PENETRATING FRONT KICK

The basic *Penetrating Front Kick* (See 'The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks') is probably one of the easiest Kicks to learn and execute, but it still needs assiduous practice. It is an aggressive forward maneuver, and therefore suited to the offensive spirit required. In *Krav Maga*, the Kick is used towards the solar plexus, the lower belly (below the belly button), the lower ribs (if the opponent is sideways or in a diagonal position) or the groin area just above the testicles (as the impact will both reverberate and will hurt the hip bones). If the opponent has his back to you, you can target the spine at kidneys level or the coccyx area (tailbone). *Make sure you train to target those points only*; visualize it when you hit the training bag, and concentrate on precision when drilling with a partner.

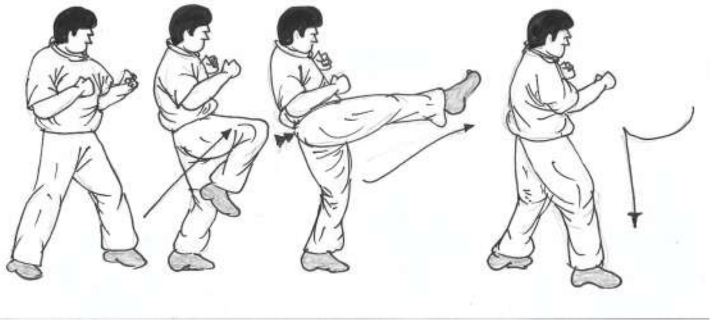
It is important to execute the Kick in its ***Penetrating form***, and not in a 'pushy' way that dissipates power. An opponent hit by a good Kick stays in place to crumble… If your kick is a Pushing version, he will just be sent away.

The Penetrating form is illustrated with Drawings and Photos. Please note that only the rear-leg version relevant to basic Krav Maga; the front-leg variation is not powerful enough for optimum penetrating power by most trainees. As illustrated, lift the knee of your rear leg powerfully forward (at about waist level); this is the chambering position. Without interruption, you start extending the leg to develop the kick directly towards the target. Just before impact, you push forward with your hips. Penetrate the target by a few inches and pull your leg back towards the chambering position, from where it will be sent back to the ground rearwards (where it comes from) or forwards (both options must be drilled).

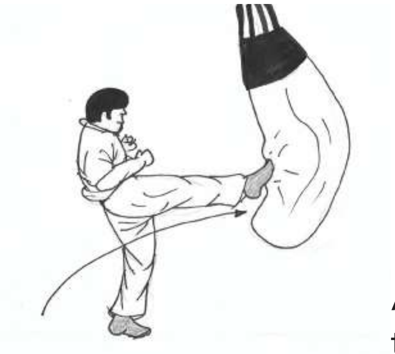


Penetrating Front kick landing back rearwards

If you are wearing shoes, the impact will be with the tip of your shoe. If you are bare footed, the impact will be preferably with the 'ball' of your foot (toes lifted as high as possible); you can also use the heel by flexing your foot, but it makes the kick a bit shorter and a little more 'pushy'.

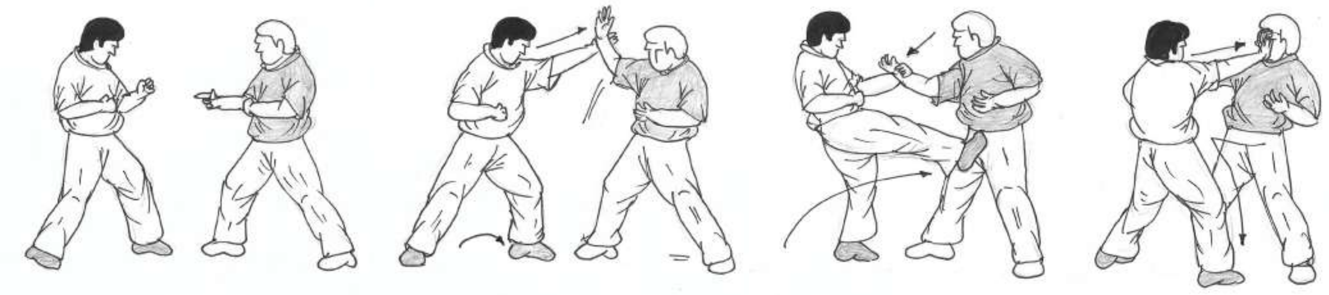


Penetrating Front Kick landing forward



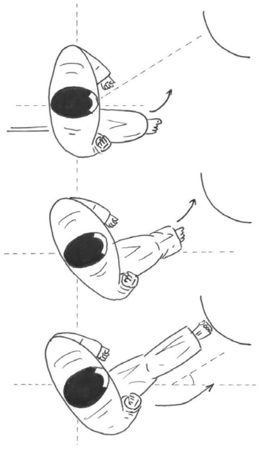
The hips push forward at impact for a penetrating kick

According to the principles of *Krav Maga*, it is best to land the kicking foot *forward* and to keep attacking the opponent aggressively; in order to end the confrontation as early as possible. In the illustrated example you take the initiative with an aggressive lunging (fake) Jab to catch his front hand. Pull on the hand while kicking his lower abdomen. Kick a few inches ***into*** the general groin area, and chamber back. Land forward while striking his nose with a direct Palm Strike (The fingers should aim at touching the eyes too).

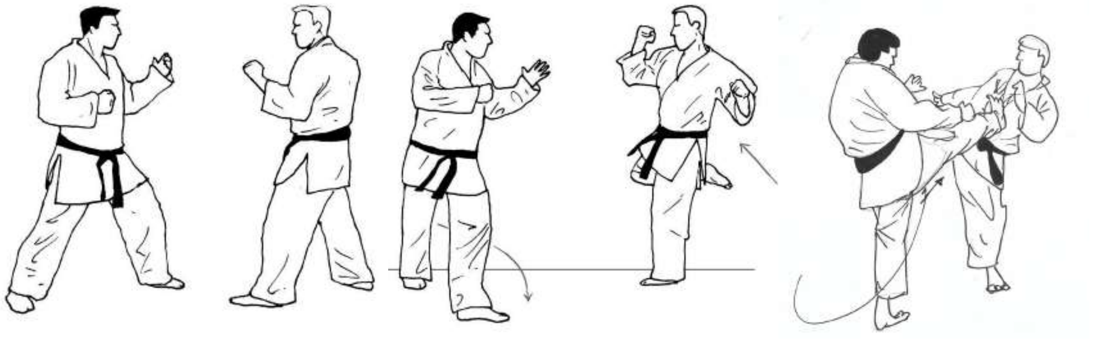


Penetrating Front Kick to the groin area, with hand grab. Land forward to follow up with Palm Strike

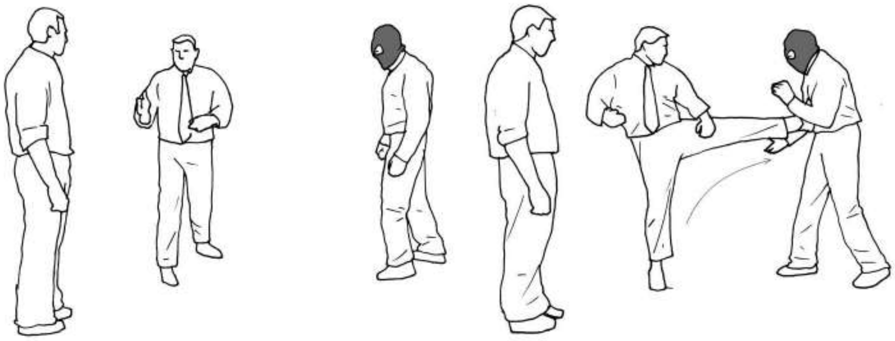
The only Penetrating variations worth drilling for the Krav Maga Artist are both ***Oblique versions*** in which the opponent is not directly in front of you. You can need to kick obliquely to your outside (shorter) or to your in-side (longer). Your opponent could have moved to evade you, or it can even be about another attacker who needs to be dealt with. It is quite important to drill those variations on the heavy bag for familiarity. The coming Drawings and Photos will illustrate the technique and its importance.



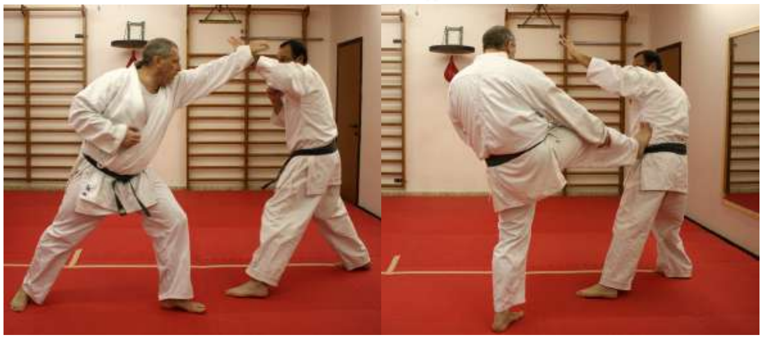
The Oblique Front Kick to the inside – top view



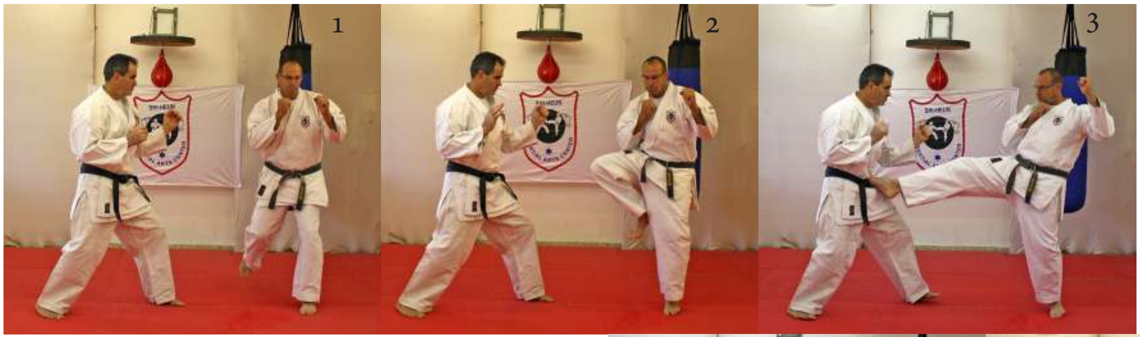
An Applied Oblique Front Kick



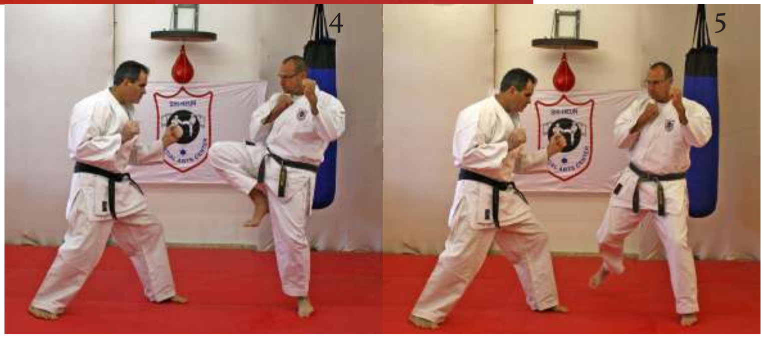
An applied Oblique Front Kick to your out-side: you look at the opponent in front, but kick the opponent on your side



Step diagonally out while punching, and execute a surprising Inside Oblique Front Kick to the ribs uncovered by the opponent's block

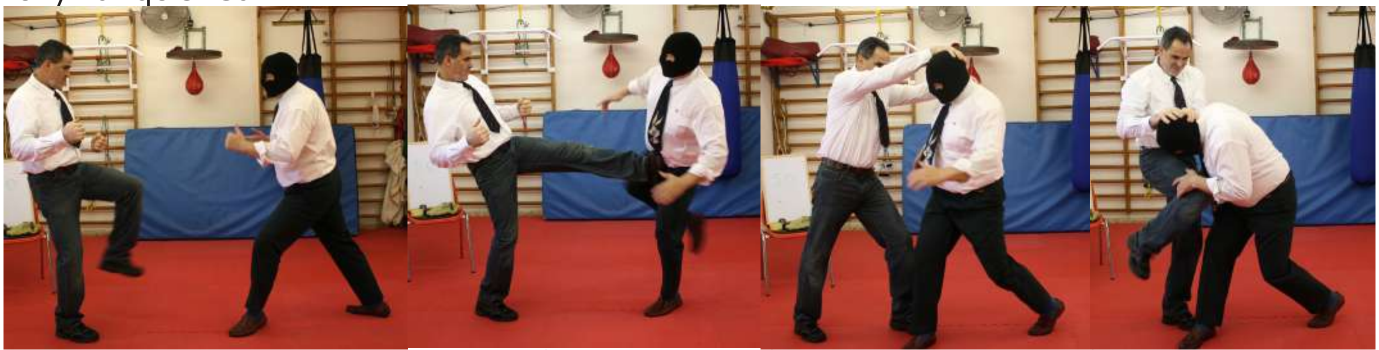


The technical execution of the Oblique Front Kick to the Outside

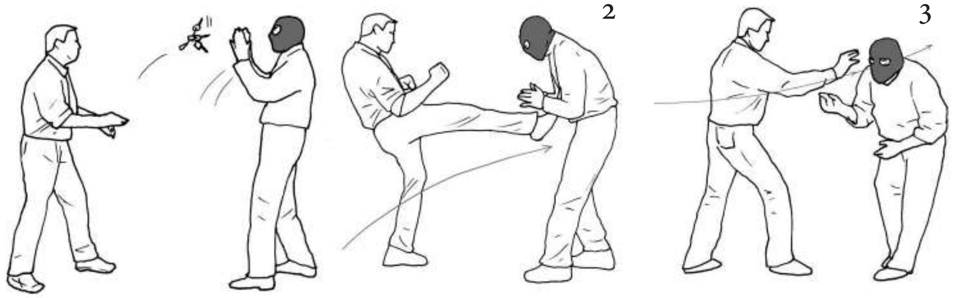


Here follow two applications including a basic *Penetrating Front Kick*.
The Photos illustrate the stopping of an attacker's kick in its early stages: you execute the Penetrating Front Kick fast towards his hip joint or lower abdomen. Make sure it is not a 'push' but a '*kick-through*'. Take advantage of his being put off-balance and rattled by the shock wave in the general groin area: Catch his head by the hair or the ears, and pull it into a brutal Knee Strike. Aim for the nose, in order to blur his vision, restrict his respiration and cause demoralizing bleeding. Keep striking until the fight is clearly won.

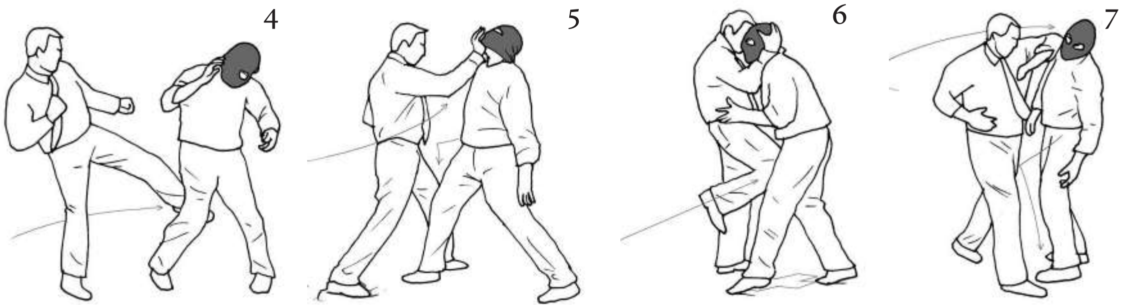
The Illustrations show the use of the Penetrating Front Kick as a preemptive strike against a threatening assailant. Divert his attention up by throwing (brusquely and powerfully) your keys or anything else you have (dirt, book, wallet,...) towards his eyes. Kick towards his lower belly as he reacts up. And follow up with ***Retzev***: Fingers to his eyes, Low Kick to the knee, Palm Strike to the chin or nose, catch his head preferably by the ears for a Knee Strike to the groin, Circular Elbow Strike to the side of the head (temple, ear, jaw hinge) or of the neck (carotid area). Do not stop until the assailant is fully vanquished.



Front Stop Kick to the hip of an kicking attacker, followed by Knee Strike to the face



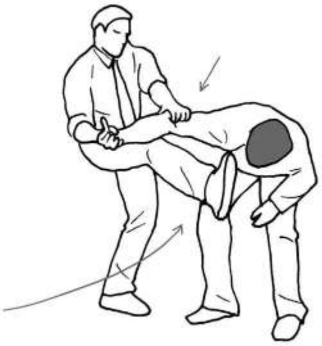
Use an everyday object thrown towards his eyes to divert his attention up, kick towards his lower belly, and ... Retzev!



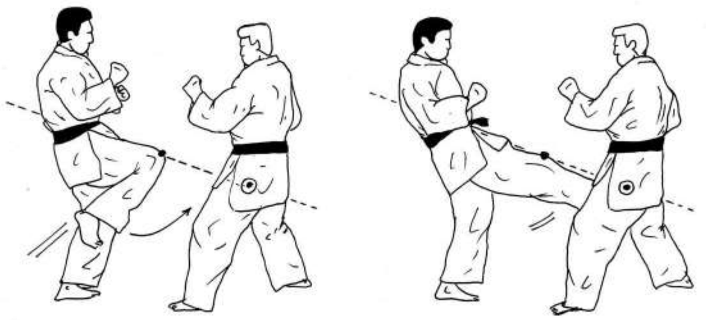
4.2. The Upward Front Kick

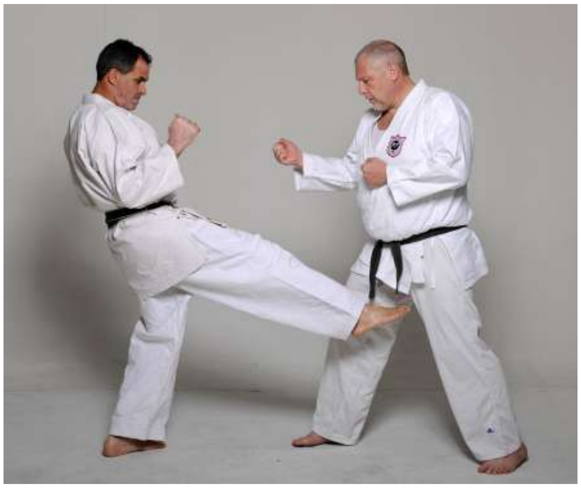
The Upward Front Kick (See 'Low Kicks') is one of the important Kicks of *Krav Maga*, simply because it generally targets …the testicles. In Krav Maga, there are no other worthwhile targets to be hit from below on a standing opponent: the chin and the armpit are great targets for a skilled practitioner, but too high to be considered by mainstream Krav Maga. Of course, if your opponent is bent over by pain or by a lock, his nose (face in general) will make a great target.

Upward Front Kick to the armpit: usually too high for mainstream Krav Maga

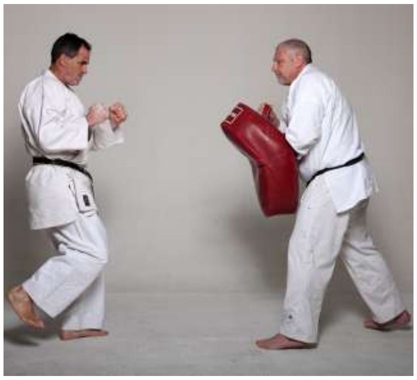

Upward Front Kick to the face of a bent-over opponent

The execution of the Kick starts, like for the Penetrating version, with a fast and powerful chambering of the rear knee. But this time, you will lift the knee just enough to allow for the development of the leg upwards all the way a few inches into the testicles. There is no need to lift the knee above what is necessary to achieve that. Moreover, the extension of the leg can start a little before the full chamber. There is no real hip push in this version; the only reason to push the hips would be to gain some range. Another difference with the previous Front Kick is the fact that this Upward Kick is more about speed than power: keep the muscles relaxed until impact in order to gain speed; the sensitivity of the target will make most of the work.

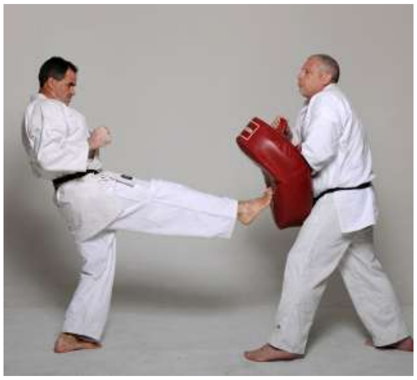

The Upward front Kick to the groin


Connect with the top of the foot or the front ankle

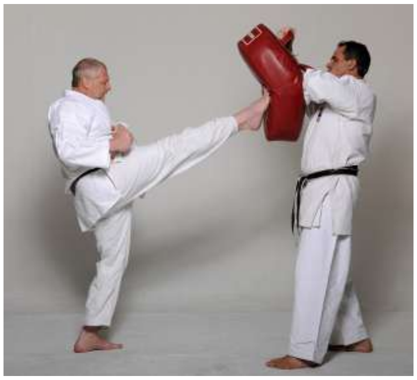
The Illustrations show clearly the *difference of trajectory* between the Penetrating and the Upward Front Kicks. In order to maximize reverberating impact, the contact will be with the top of the extended foot, including the upper ankle (if you are close). It is vital to kick a few inches into target and not only slap it. Kick *through* a little, and then immediately pull the foot back into chambering position before landing. Not only is it not advised to let your leg linger around an opponent who could catch it, but the pull-back from the hit target confers some 'whipping effect' to the Kick that further increases the power of impact.



Upward and Penetrating Front Kicks start in the same way



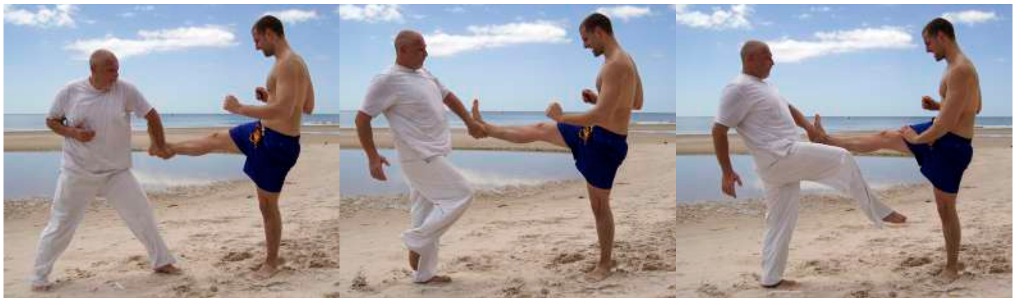
Hip Push and straight trajectory into the Penetrating version



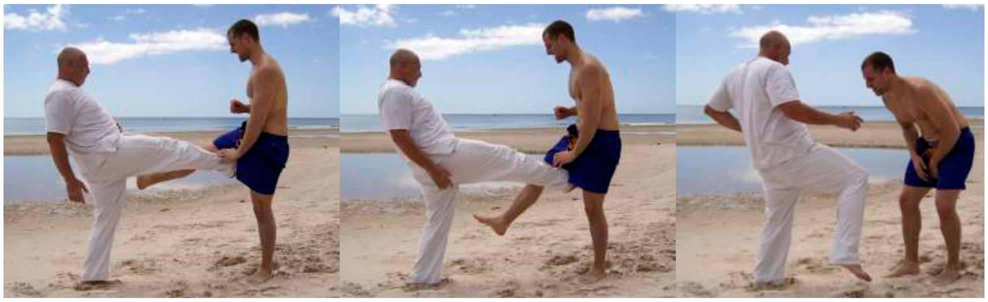
No hip push and upward trajectory in the Upward version

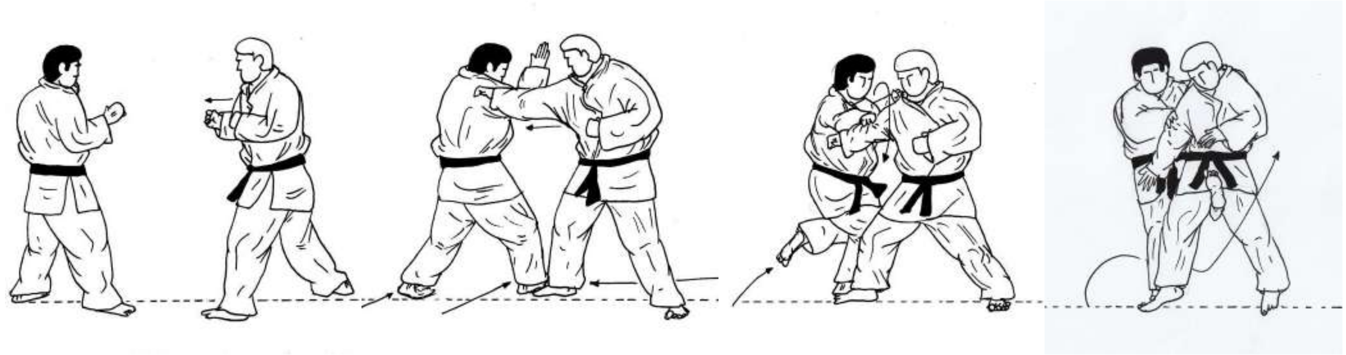
The Kick needs drilling on the **bottom** of the heavy bag (hanging at groin level of course), but remember that *speed* is of the essence.

This is a great self-defense Kick, and a few applied examples are presented here. It should be noted that the groin can be attacked in the same manner from the front *and from behind.*



Upward groin Front Kick after blocking a Front Kick

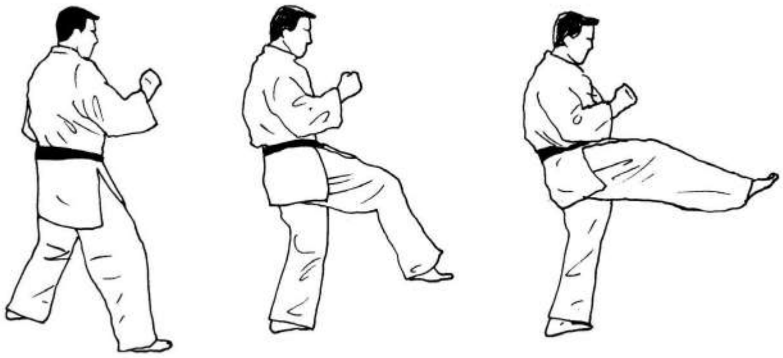




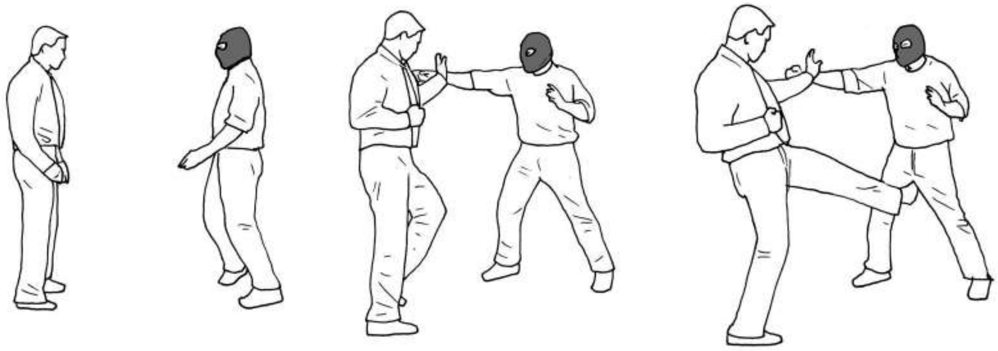
Outside evasion against an Punching Attack, followed by groin Kick from behind

The two variations of the basic Kick with some relevance to Krav Maga would be the *Front-leg* version and the *Hopping* version.

The Front-leg version is trivial: it simply uses the front leg instead of the rear one, with the same chambering and development. Its importance resides in the fact that you should always be aware of your opponent's testicles and ready to hit them directly from the closest weapon. Sometimes, it simply means to lift the front foot up. The sensitivity of the target can excuse all sorts of short-cuts in terms of clean technique and power generation.

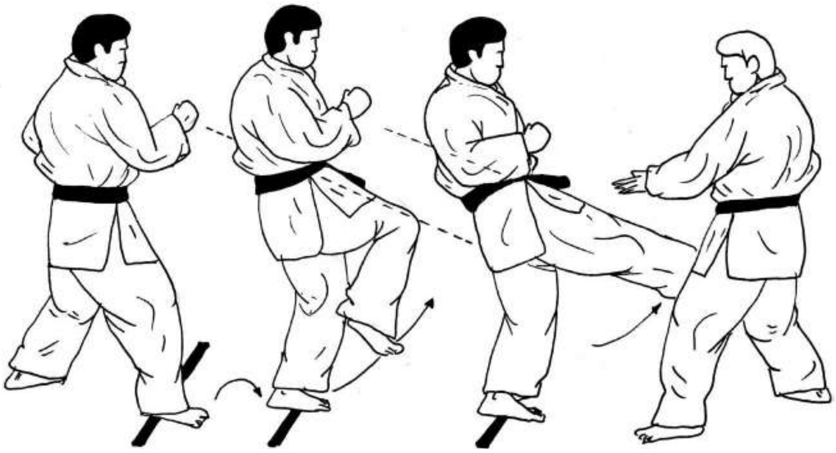


The front-leg Upward Front Kick



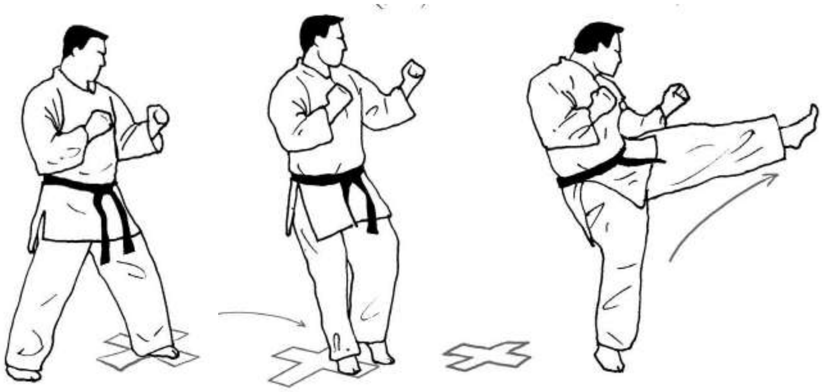
Applied front-leg Upward Front kick: evade forward and in on a punching attack and lift you front leg directly into the assailant's groin

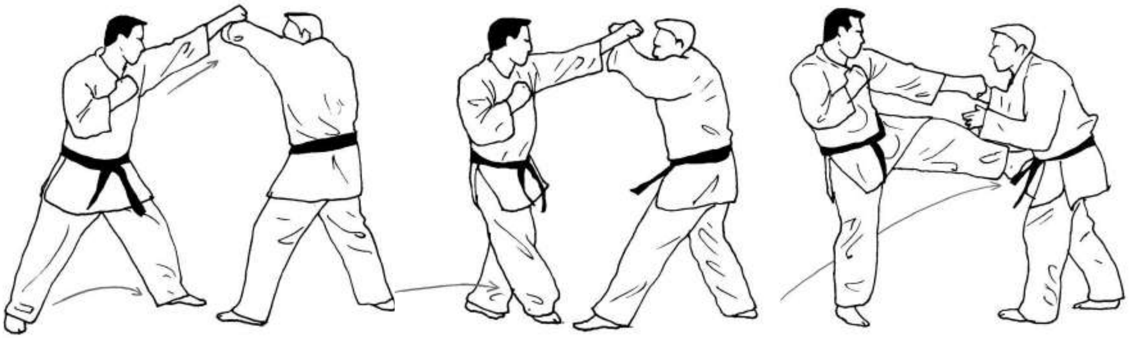
The Hopping version is also a front-leg version, but with more reach: your rear foot comes to take the place of your front foot (or even a little further). Your front foot is already on its way to the opponent's groin. *Everything happens fast in a low and subdued hop or a discreet Cross-step towards him*. It is imperative to avoid any telegraphing of the coming attack, like hand movements or a sudden bobbing up of the head.



The hopping Upward Front Kick

Hopping Front Kick can be a full hop...

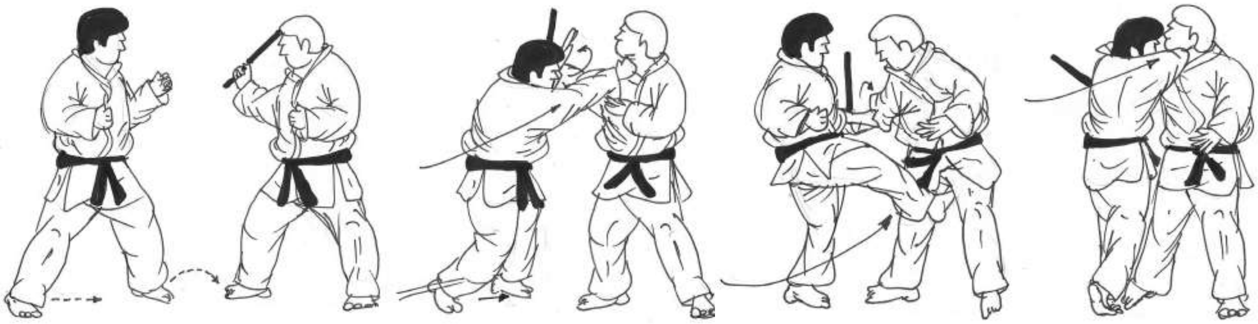




...or can be a discreet cross step

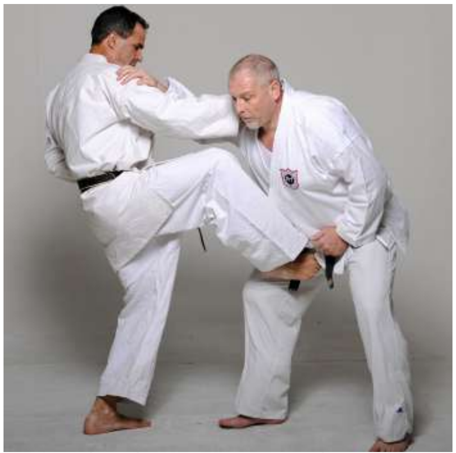
An example of applied Upward Front Kick is presented below. Many more will appear in the text: this is a bread-and-butter *Krav Maga Kick*!

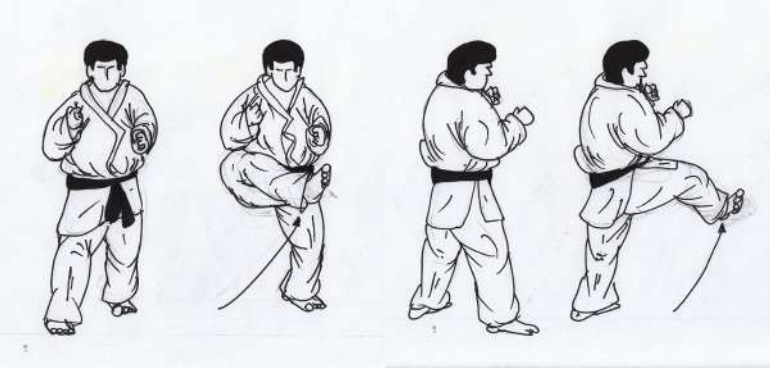
The ubiquitous Groin Kick: in this example after a preemptive high punch

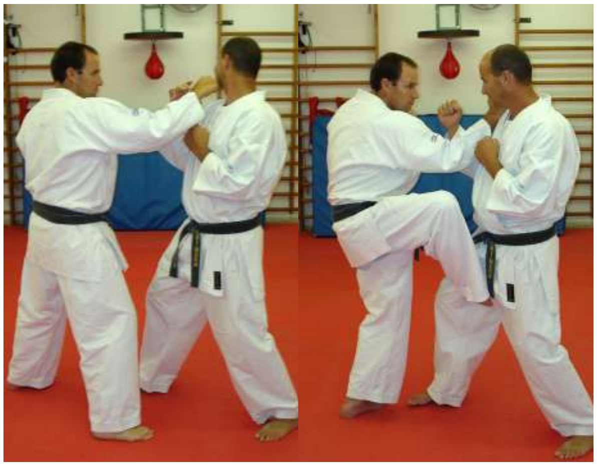


4.3. THE PHANTOM GROIN KICK

This is a great maneuver already presented in '*Stealth Kicks*'. In the previous section, we have underlined the importance of being always aware of the placement of your opponent's testicles and of the shortest way to hit them at any time. This Kick is the embodiment of this concept: you are very close to the assailant and simply lift your foot into his groin, directly. In order to do that, if you are close, you need to open your knee to the outside and to connect with the inside part of the foot. This fantastic Kick can be delivered from the rear or the front foot.


The Phantom Groin Kick, Ouch!


The Phantom Groin Kick

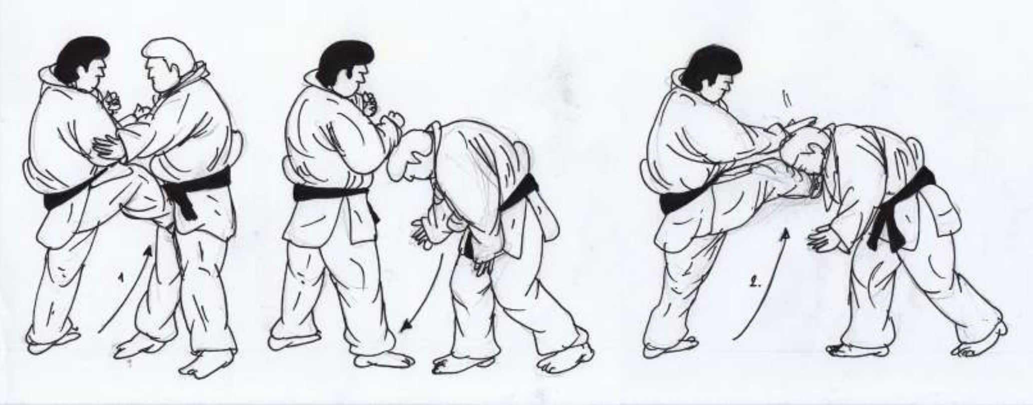

After a punch in close combat

This is a fantastic Kick that you should drill a lot on the heavy bag or on the partner-hold striking pads. Drilling for speed and power is necessary to make this a supreme kicking maneuver. This Kick should be nearly automatic if you find yourself in this close range. It should launch without thinking!

A Kick worth drilling

Again, you must make sure that you ***penetrate*** the target for an inch or two, before you retract the leg; and then of course keep fighting (In the *Krav Maga* spirit of no stopping your offensive until the fight is over)…

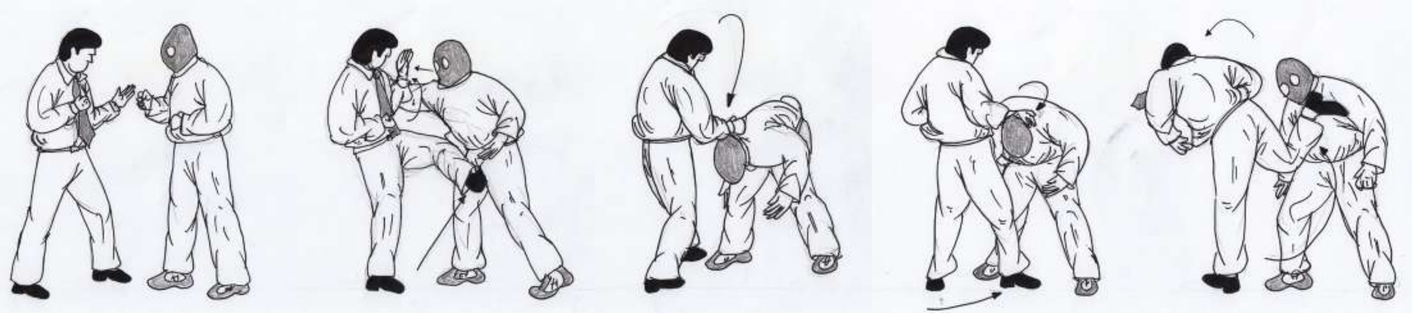
… The Kick can be also used against the opponent's nose (face) if he is bent over for some reason or another. The following example, against an assailant rushing to grab you, shows the double use of the Kick: the groin first, then the face.



Groin-kicked opponent bends over to get phantom-kicked in the nose

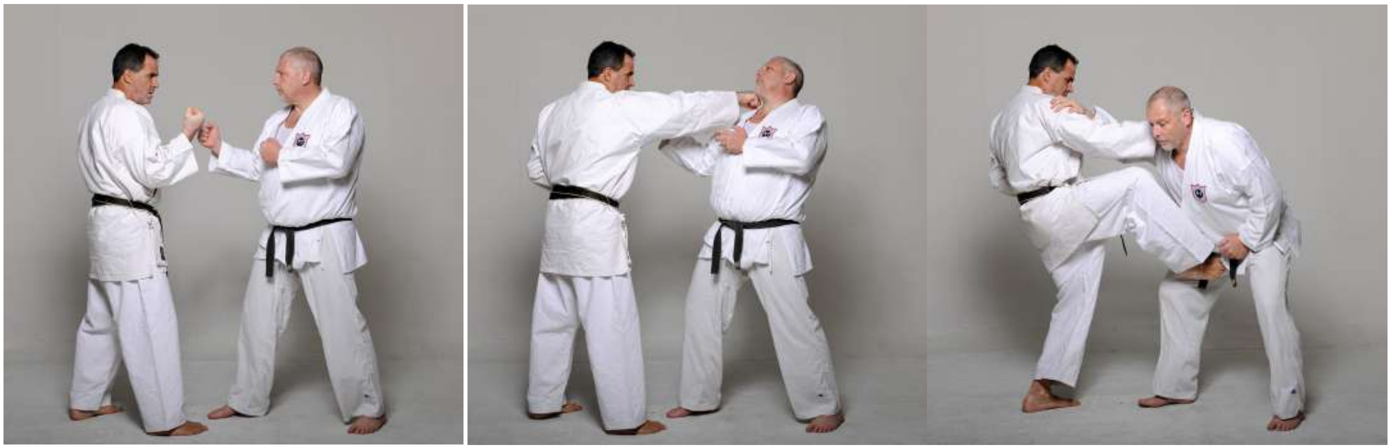
A few more applied examples are presented below.

In the first example, you attack an opponent getting too close. As he bends over in groin pain, you strike the back of his neck (Hammer-fist or Forearm), you knee his face, and then hooking-uppercut-back kick his head as you move away.



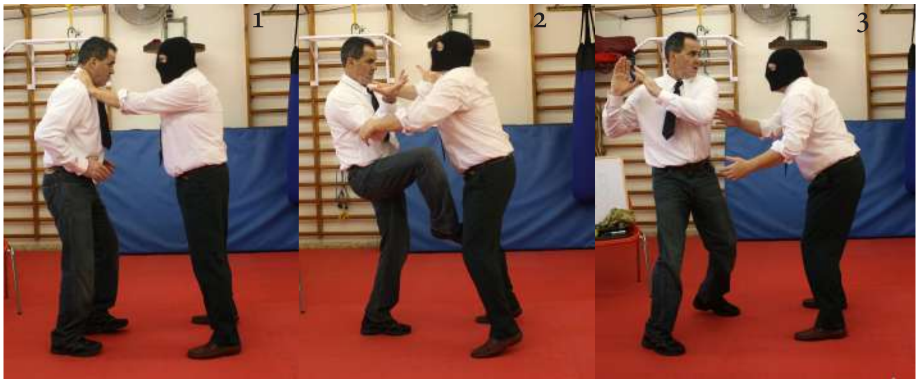
Preemptive attack of close opponent

The reader is invited to remember that **hi/low** is usually the way to go; change of height of subsequent attacks will always overwhelm the opponent. Keep striking, of course.

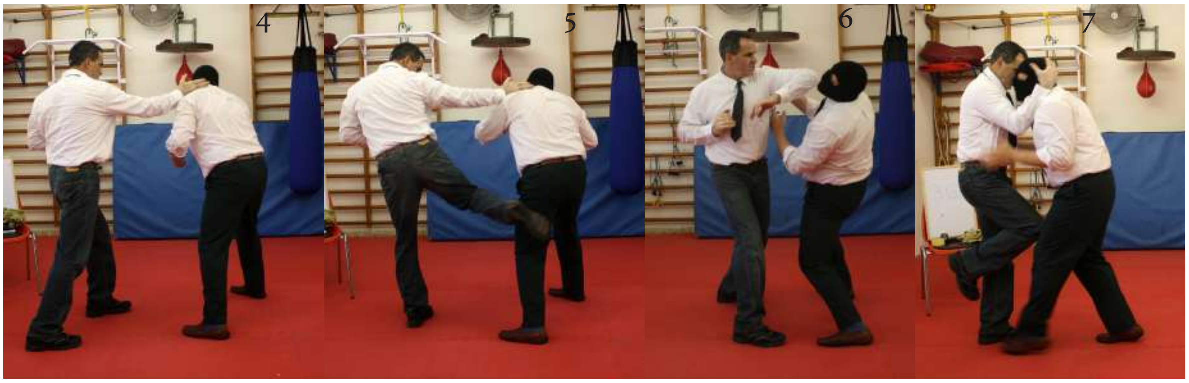


High Jab, unexpected groin kick

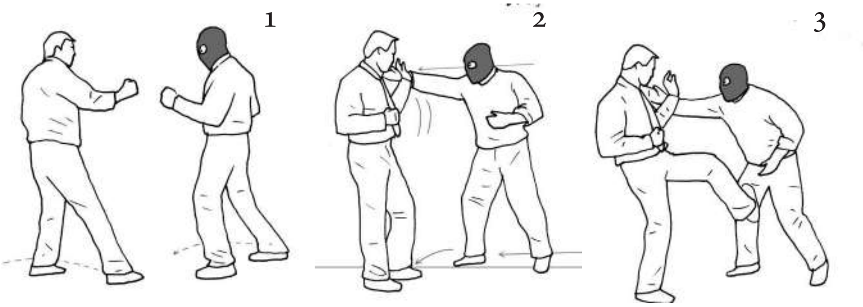
This is obviously the kick of choice when you get grabbed from close up, for example in a Front Choke. Kick fast and use the paincaused to open the attacking arms. Use the momentum and the hips for a hand-blade chop to the side of the neck (carotid strike-through). This pulls a natural 'Low Kick', followed by an Elbow Strike. You can grab his head for a concluding Knee Strike to the groin (again).



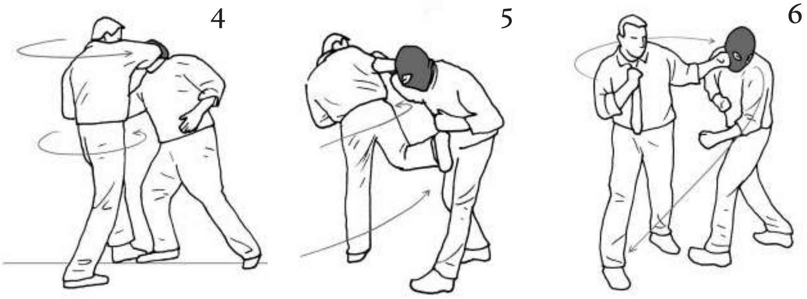
Kick when caught in a choke, and start Retzev



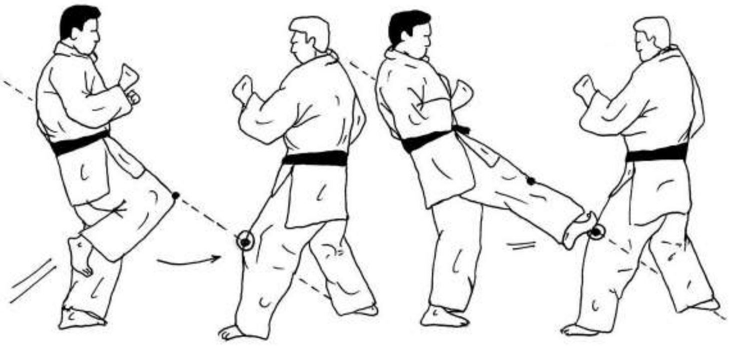
The Kick is best used preemptively, but it can also be used as a Counter after blocking a punch. The attacker bends in pain into an Elbow Strike, and gets another Groin Kick. Then a Cross, then...



Counter with a Phantom Groin Kick, and unleash the Retzev

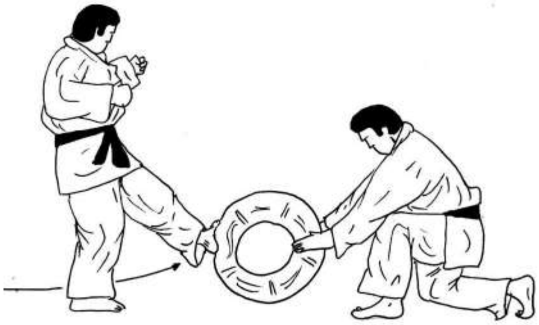


4.4. The Low Front Kick



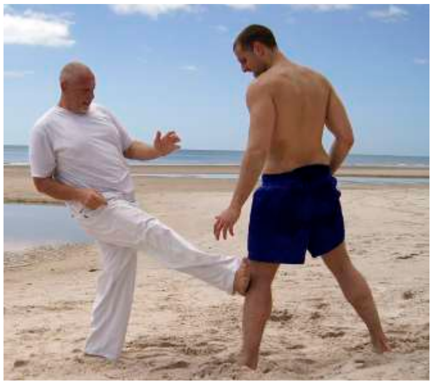
No need for a high chamber

The Low version of the Front Kick (See '*Low Kicks*') can be "Penetrating" or "Upward", or most of the time a hybrid between the two. In Krav Maga, the Kick targets the knee or the shin (from ankle, all the way up to knee). There is no need for a high chamber, but some chambering is required for power delivery: not higher than needed for leg development. Although the Kick seems simple and easy, it still requires training for a 'dry' and powerful automatic delivery. It is advised to drill against an old tire in order to acquire the habit to kick powerfully an inch or two ***into*** the target. If you have drilled the Kick seriously in this way, it can be extremely painful at impact and you have a very surprising and debilitating weapon in your arsenal.

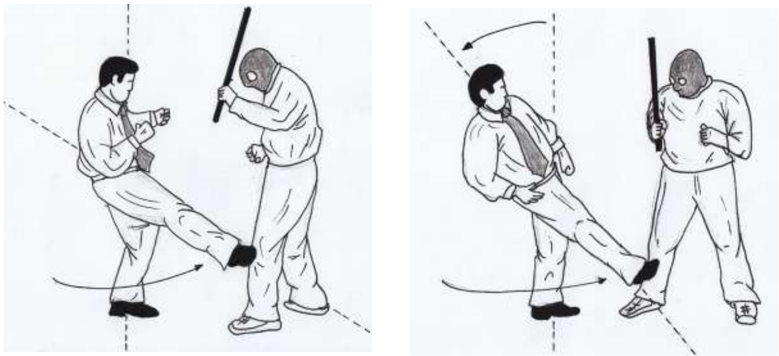


Drill this Kick hard, it is worth your while

If you are wearing hard-soled (or –tipped) shoes, you will of course connect with the tip of the shoe (a few inches in!). If you are bare-footed, you can connect with the ball of the foot under the toes or with the in-side of the foot (soccer-style). Note that you can also deliver the Kick with some bending rearwards, to keep your head out of danger.



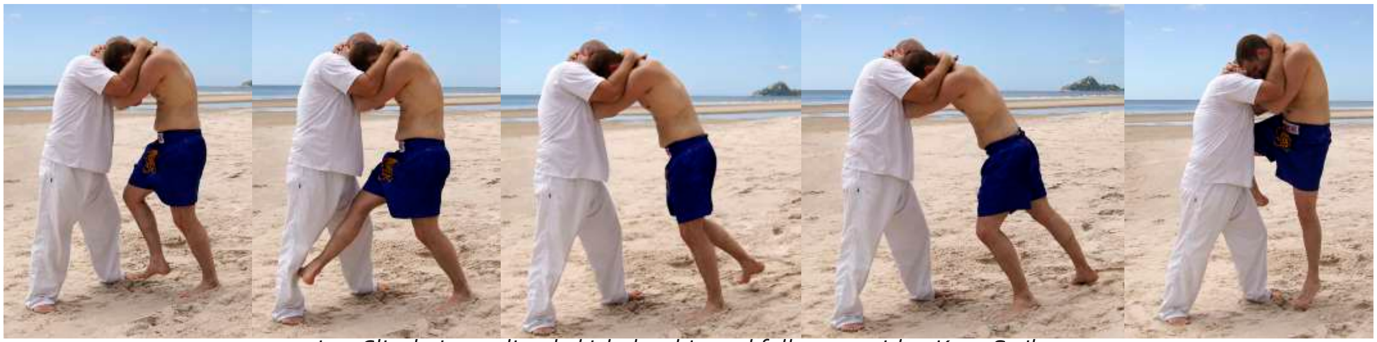
The soccer-style version



The Kick can be delivered straight or bending away

An import aspect of good execution is maximum ***Stealth***: you have to make sure you do not telegraph your delivery by moving your upper body in any way. Try to keep your lower body independent. You can even use your hands or voice for an idiotic and non-threatening diversion that will keep the opponent's attention up.

At the end of the section, we shall a few examples of applied Low Front Kick. This Kick is very under-appreciated. With some training, it becomes extremely fast, extremely easy to execute successfully, extremely painful and fantastic to start your winning combination that will end the fight. It can also be an annoying *Attrition Kick* that saps your opponent's will to fight, annoys him greatly and gets him expecting more of those just when you then launch another completely different attack. The Kick should also be nearly automatic when you get in range, and even more if you find yourself in a Clinch.



In a Clinch, immediately kick the shin and follow up with a Knee Strike

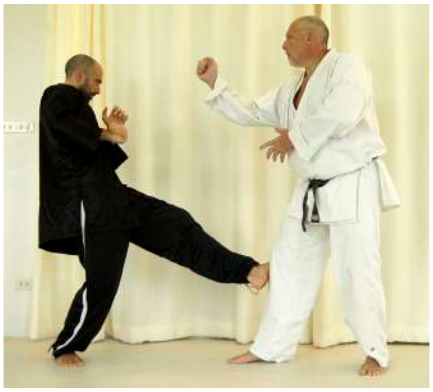
With the exception of kicking a downed opponent, the Kick should *exclusively target the shin* (full of nervous endings) on all its length, or the *knee* from all directions: the front, the in-side, the out-side and the back. But remember to always ***kick through*** for an inch or two. From the front, the ideal sensitive point would be just below the kneecap, in a slightly (natural) upward way.

A downed opponent can be kicked in the face or the ribs, and this should of course be followed by more attacks, until he yields..

Kick a downed opponent and follow up

There is a slightly more ***stomping variation*** of the Kick to attack the knee from above downwards. It is the *Tilted-heel version*, which requires a higher chamber and connects with the plant (bottom) of the foot. It also requires to kick through the target all the way (sometimes all the way to the ground). See at the top of next page.

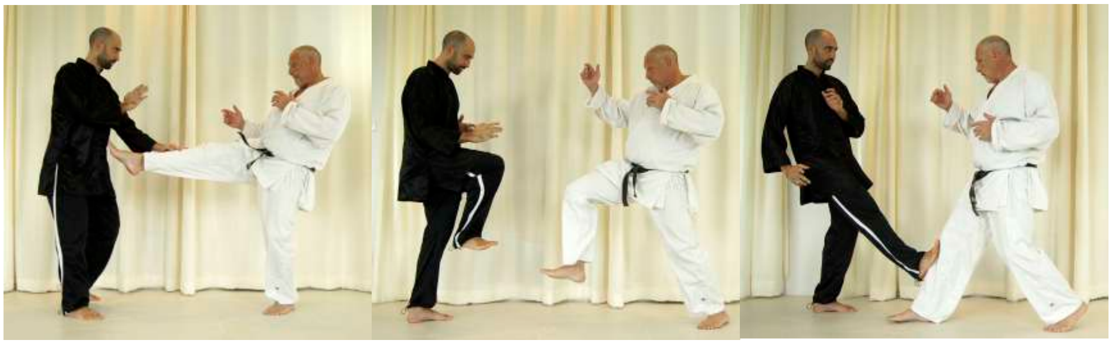
➤



The tilted-heel, more crushing, version of the Low Front Kick

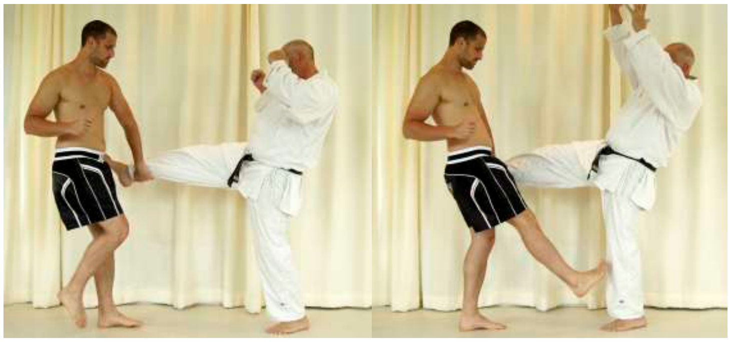
And here come a few applied examples, as promised.

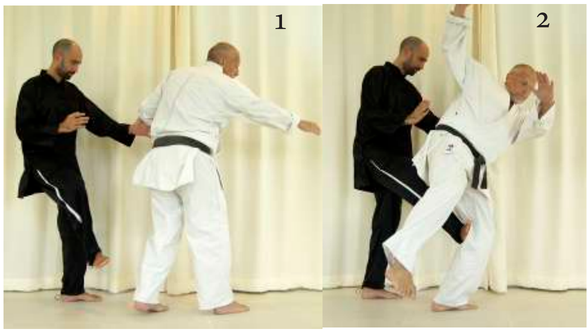
A fast Low Kick to a ***landing kicking leg***, or to a ***stepping le***g, is very painful and will allow you to start a blitz *Retzev*. The same applies to the ***standing leg*** of a kicking assailant.



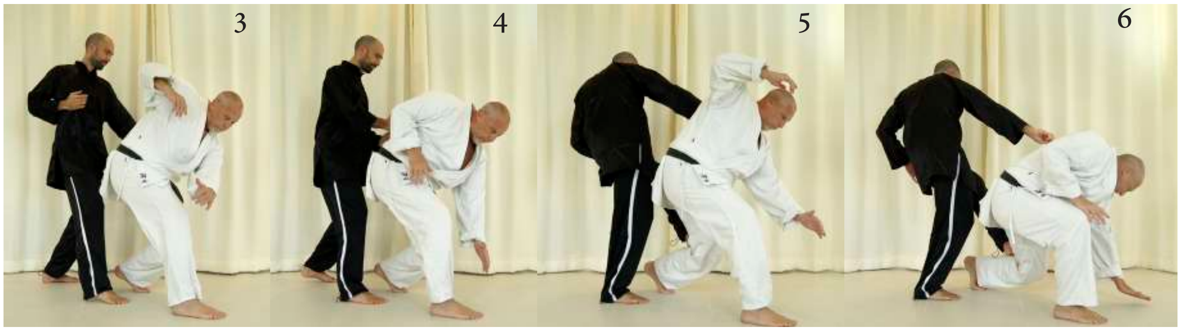
Kick the shin of a landing kicking leg

Kick the shin of a standing leg

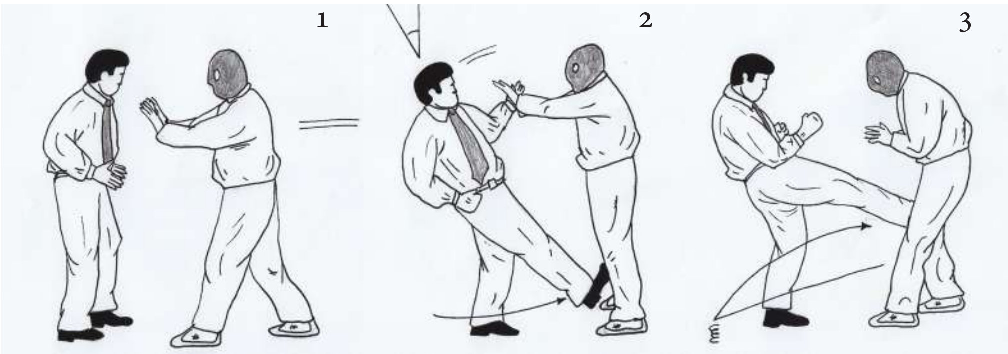




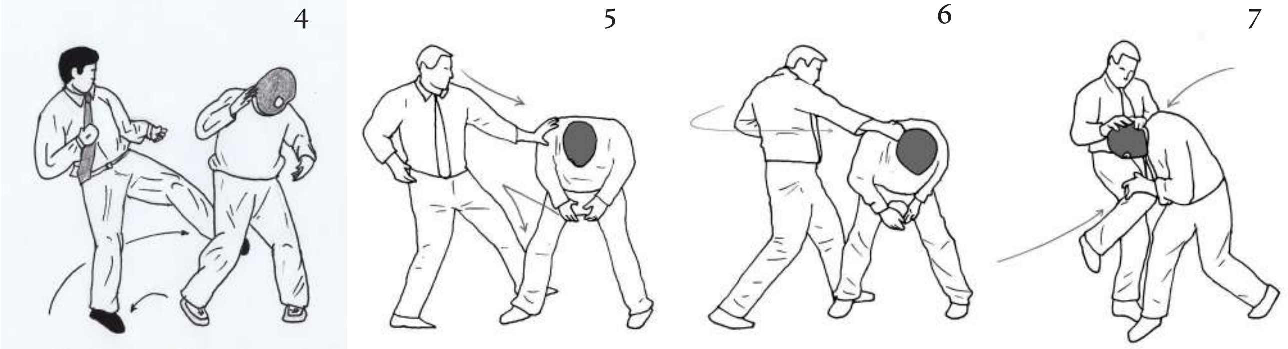
Stop a Spin-back Kick by kicking the standing leg and follow up with a stomping kick into the back of his knee



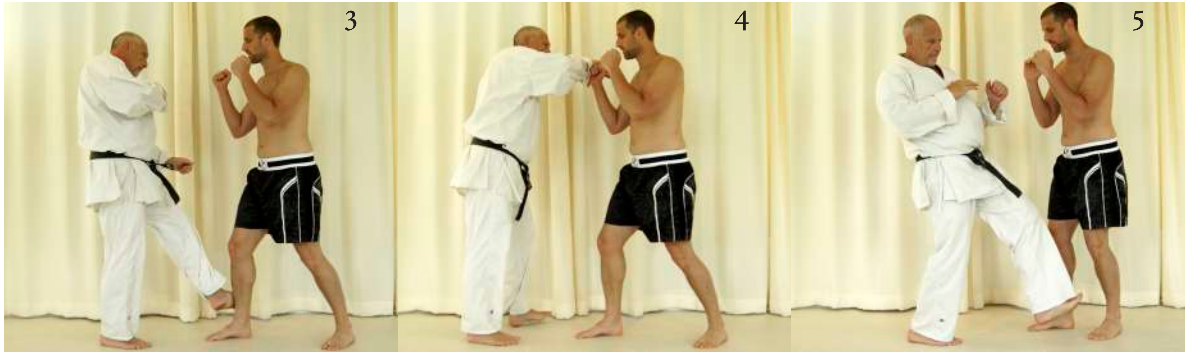
The Kick is great to stop the momentum of an attacker trying to rush you for a push or for a grab. Kick brutally *through* the shin of the stepping leg, let your leg come back to *rebound* on the floor and come back forward for a Groin Kick. You could follow up with a 'Low Kick', a Punch to the head, and a Knee Strike.



Stop an assailant coming towards you with a Low Front Kick, then start Retzev



And we shall conclude this section with an example of an ***offensive*** application. You attack your opponent with a high Jab/Cross combination towards the eyes. But your leg is also already on the way for a hard Low Front Kick. Follow up with another high Cross Punch to the face (aim for the nose), and then another Low Front Kick to the shin. Hi/Hi/Low/Hi/Low. And keep the *Retzev*...



Offensive Combination using the Low Front Kick

4.5. THE PUSHING FRONT STOP KICK

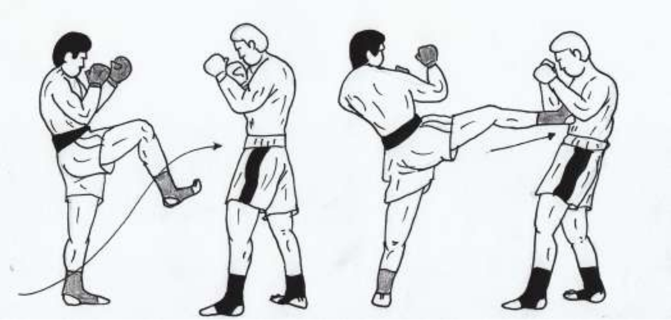
This Kick is somewhat awry of the basic principles of *Krav Maga*. As its name indicates, it is a 'Pushing' Kick, and therefore not a decisive and potentially fight-ending technique as generally required from Krav Maga Principles. It is still an important maneuver to drill, because it is sometimes the only thing between you and defeat.

The Pushing Front Stop Kick

The Pushing Front Stop Kick is used to stop and repel the assailant. It is used when you have been surprised and need to stop an attacker to have time to gather your wits and start fighting. Once the attacker has been stopped and/or pushed away, you'll revert to the exclusive use of punishing techniques like the Groin Kick.

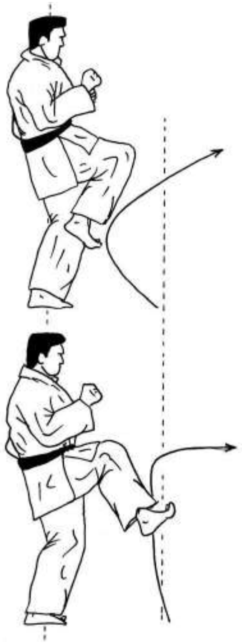
The Pushing Front Stop Kick

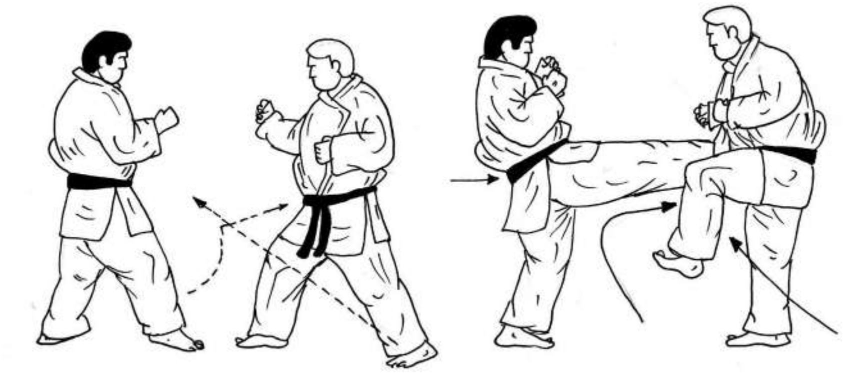
The Kick is in very common use in the hard Fighting Art of *Muay Thai* (where it is called '*Teep*'). This certainly proves its real world potential.


The Pushing Front Stop Kick: a Muay Thai favorite

The Muay Thai 'Teep' Kick' – Aviva Giveoni

The Kick is a close parent of the Penetrating Front Kick, but the chambering is executed at mid-trajectory already, which gives the Kick its 'pushy' feel. See Application at the top of next page.


Comparative chambering of the regular Penetrating Front Kick and the Pushing Front Stop Kick

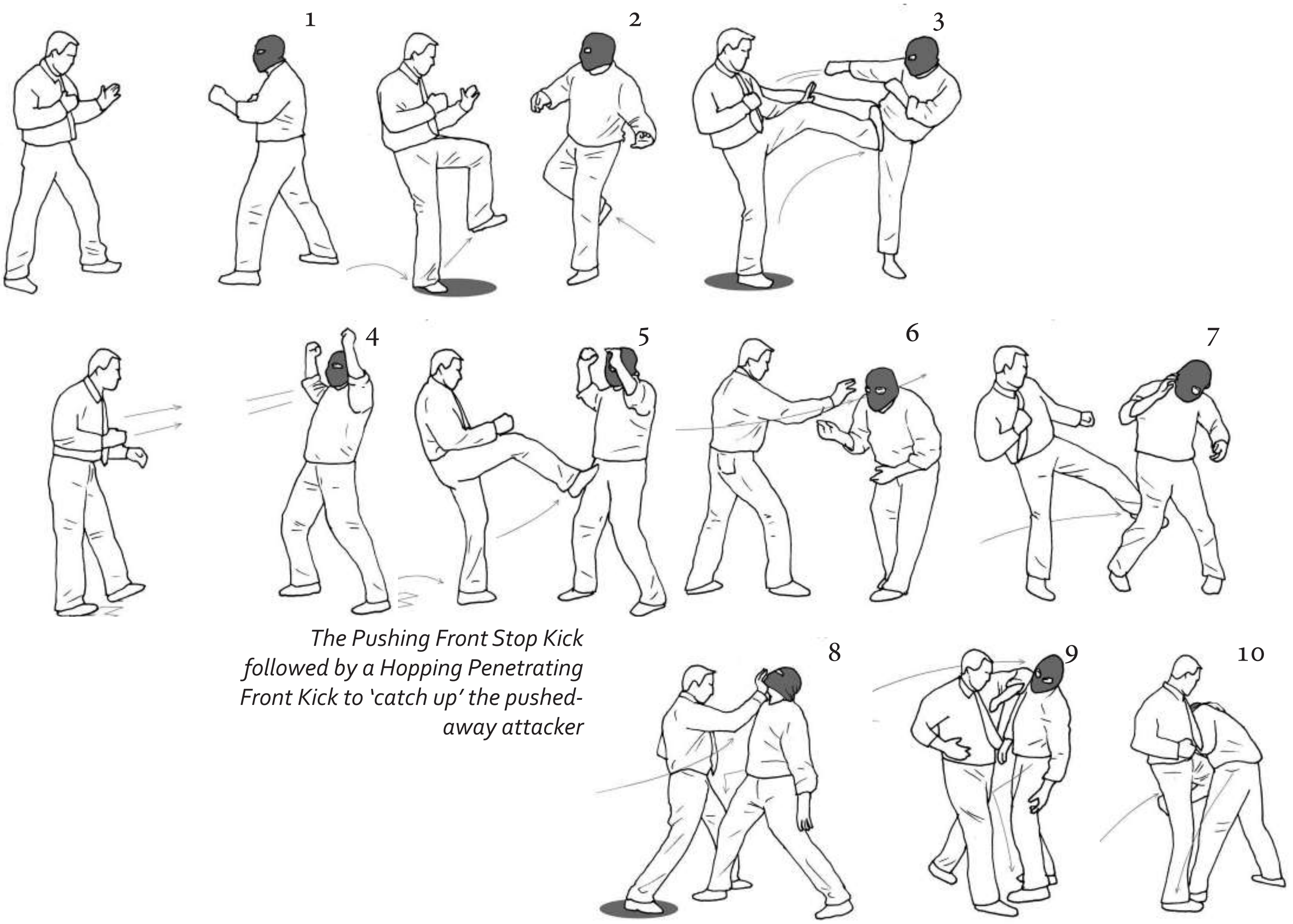


The Pushing Front Stop Kick, used against an attack by a Penetrating Front Kick

Try to stop-kick him in the general groin area

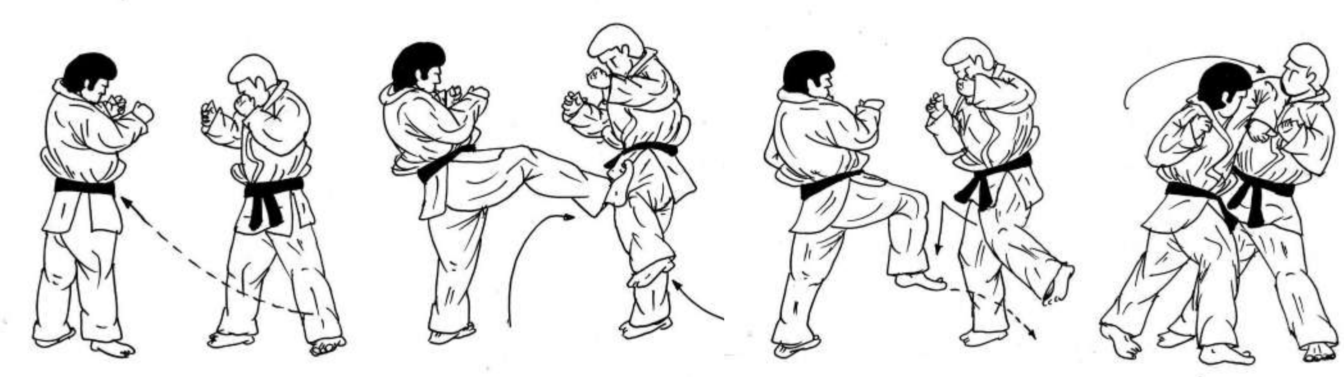
The Kick must be directed around the center of gravity of the opponent, from the solar plexus down to the lower abdomen, in order to be able to stop his forward momentum. If you have still time to finesse and focus, the ideal Krav Maga *Pushing Front Stop Kick* should be targeting the lower abdomen: in spite of being 'pushy', a strong impact to the lower abdomen will tend to reverberate to the testicles and rattle somewhat the opponent.

Remember though, that this Kick's aim is *to stop the opponent;* it should always be followed up by aggressive attacks: stick to your 'pushed' opponent and keep striking. If you have pushed your opponent far away, a good follow-up would be the *Hopping rear-leg Penetrating Front Kick*, sneaky in its unexpected range. A good example is presented at the top of next page. You stop-kick an assailant attacking you with a rear-leg Roundhouse Kick, aiming for the groin area. As your Pushing Kick has also sent him tumbling away, you follow with a Hopping rear-leg Penetrating Front Kick, also in the general lower abdomen area; this Kick is not 'pushy' but penetrating and chambered-back. Follow-up immediately with a Finger Strike towards the eyes, a 'Low Kick' through the front knee, and a Palm Strike to the chin (hi/lo/hi). You could then conclude with a hips-powered Circular Elbow Strike to the side of the head (temple/ear/jaw hinge), and a groin Knee Strike (hi/lo). Retzev is the key.



The Pushing Front Stop Kick followed by a Hopping Penetrating Front Kick to 'catch up' the pushed-away attacker

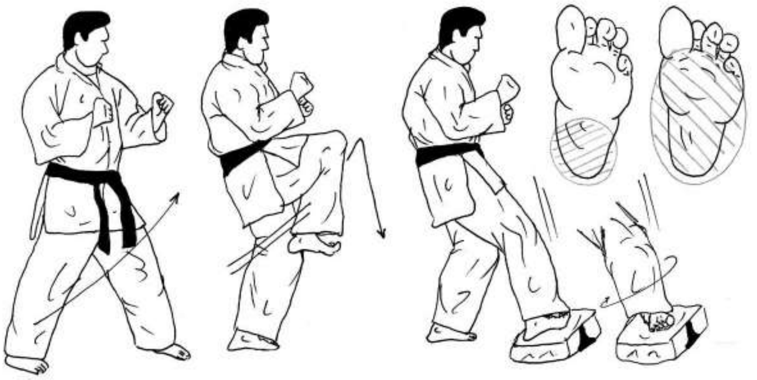
To conclude, it should be noted that the *Pushing Front Stop Kick* can also be used to stop an opponent's arm or leg travelling towards you. It is then more of a 'Leg Block' maneuver, but it can be useful as it can also cause damage to the joints of the attacker. It is still more of a defensive technique and, given the choice, Krav Maga would always go for the more offensive technique possible: if you can kick a chambering thigh, you can as well kick the groin a few inches away...



Stop Kick Block of an incoming Roundhouse Kick, and follow-up

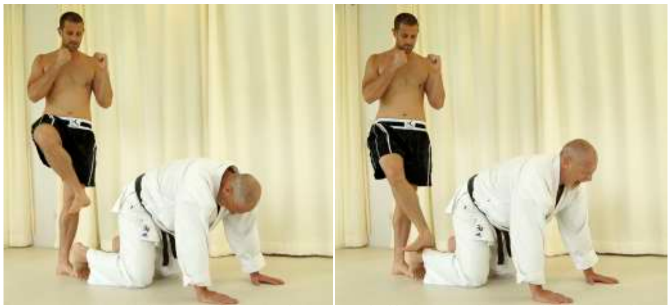
4.6. THE FRONT STOMP KICK

The Stomp Kick may seem trivial, but it should be noted that it requires serious training to become the 'Judgement Day' technique it can be. A powerful Stomp to a sensitive target can simply conclude a fight, but the *Kravist* (Krav Maga Artist) must learn to kick with all his power (after some chambering) and through the target (as if totally crushing a bug). Intense drilling is needed on tires, bags, focus pads, ...

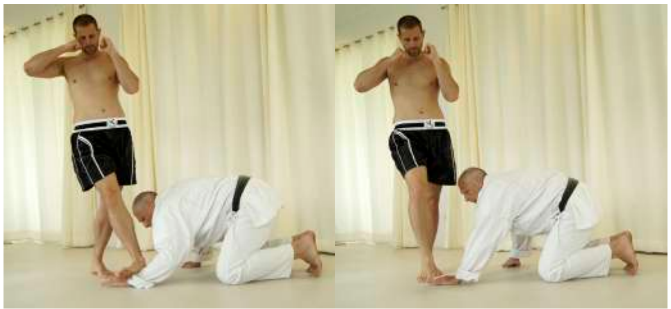


Chamber high and crush; simple but needs serious drilling

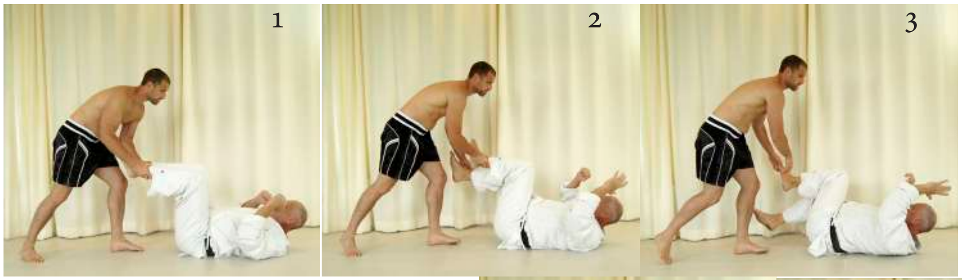
Crushing an opponent's ankle, toes, fingers, wrist or knee can definitely stop its aggressive intentions. Not mentioning the head, the lower ribs or the sternum of an opponent on the ground. Destroying a joint can make it physically impossible for an assailant to keep fighting when, sometimes, inflicting pain is not enough.



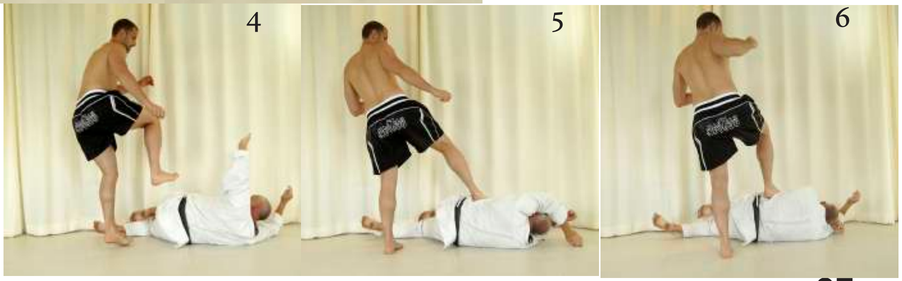
Stomping a downed attacker's Achilles' tendon will neutralize him with serious ankle damage; kick through and crush into the floor

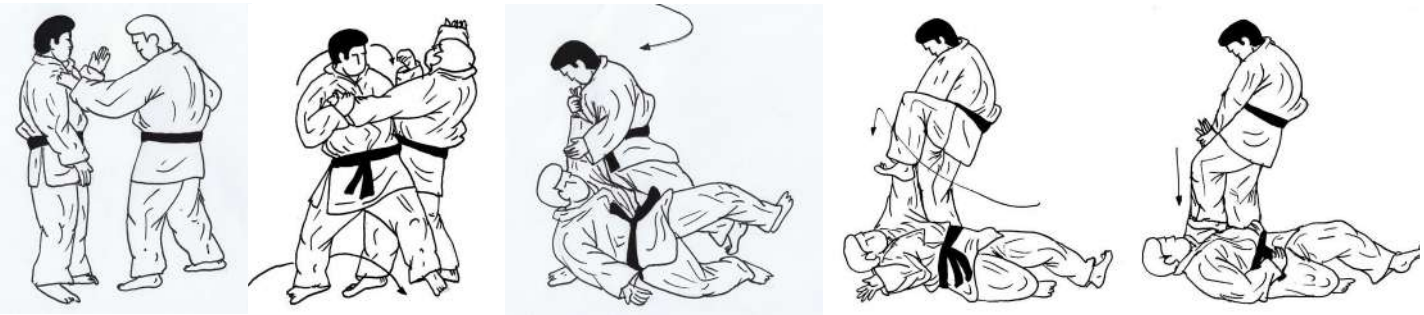


Crushing an assailant's wrists or fingers will seriously hamper his ability to keep on

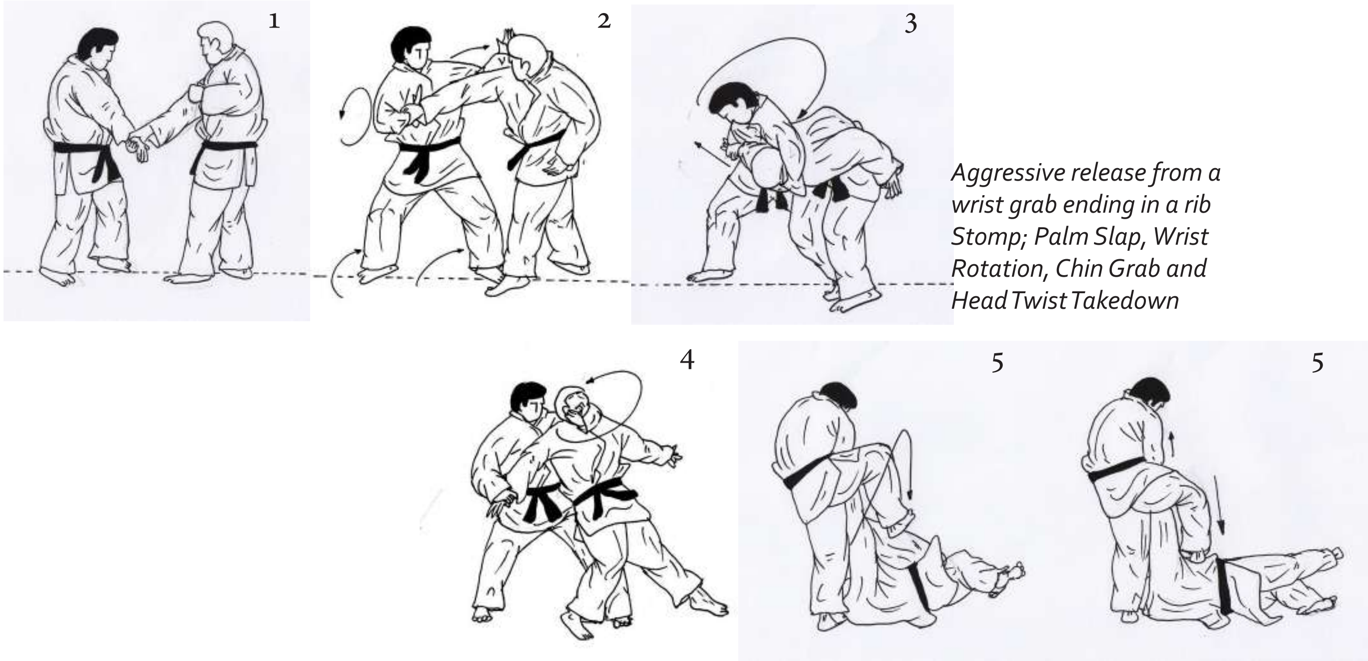


Stomp a downed opponent's lower ribs after using his legs to make him roll sideways; powerfully crushing lower ribs is an extremely dangerous technique



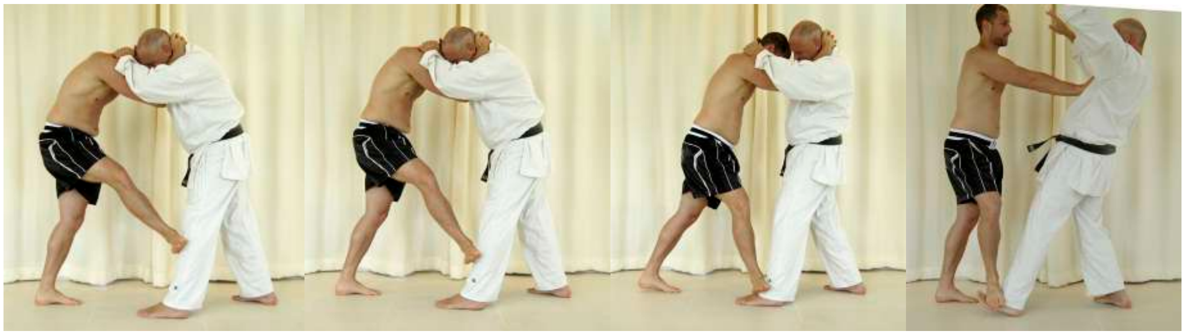


Armpit/Ribs Stomp on an assailant downed after grabbing your lapel; you have struck his grabbing biceps and taken him down with an Outside Leg Rea



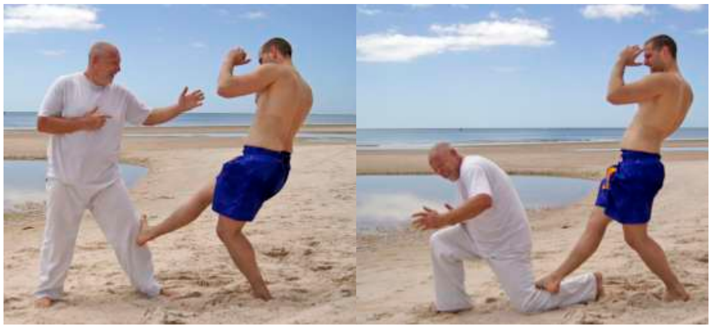
Aggressive release from a wrist grab ending in a rib Stomp; Palm Slap, Wrist Rotation, Chin Grab and Head Twist Takedown

The Stomp should be used automatically when in range: it is an extremely powerful, unexpected and disturbing technique. For example, it should be executed without even thinking about it if you suddenly find yourself in Clinching range. In that case, it could even be combined with a 'Soccer' Front Kick to the opponent's shin, followed by a scrape of same shin and a powerful Stomp of the ankle and upper foot. If, in that case, you keep your foot forcefully on his, simply pushing him back will cause him to fall and hurt his ankle joint. Such a combination, illustrated by the Photos below, takes drilling time to become automatic, but it is certainly worth the effort.

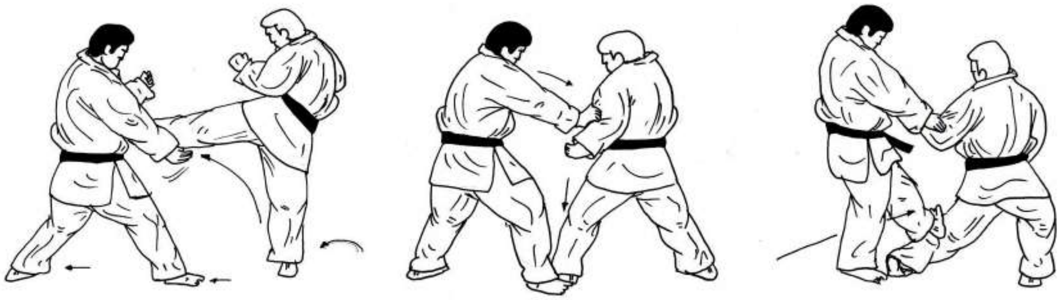


In a Clinch, automatically kick, scrape, stomp and push

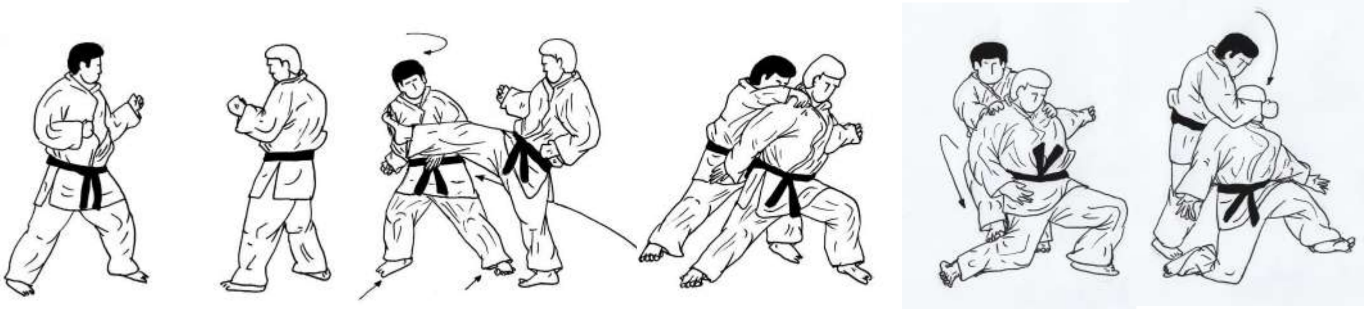
The most practical Stomp Kick is the Front Stomp *with the foot generally pointing diagonally at 45 degrees*. It is mostly used to strike the back of the knee and stomp it all the way into the floor. It is ideal for use after deflecting a kicking attack.



The Knee Stomp from the front

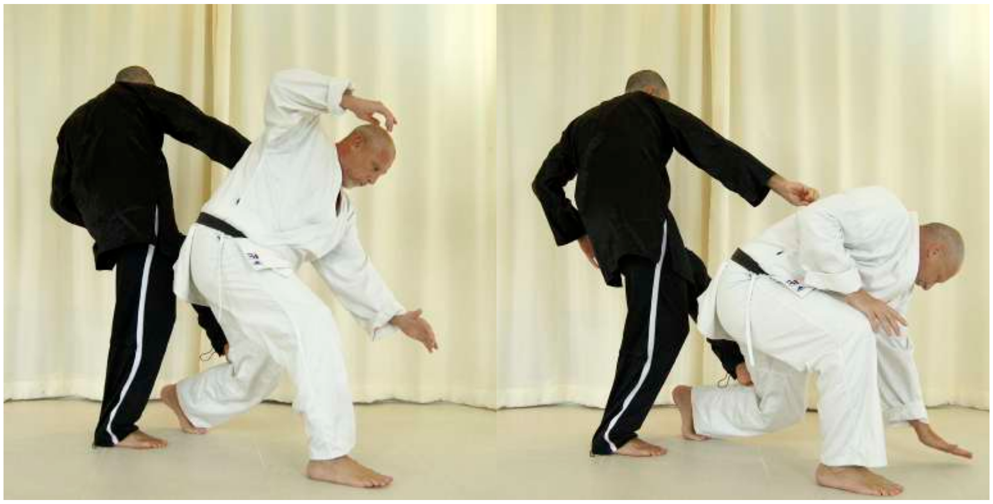


Knee Stomp after kick deflection, when still in front of the opponent



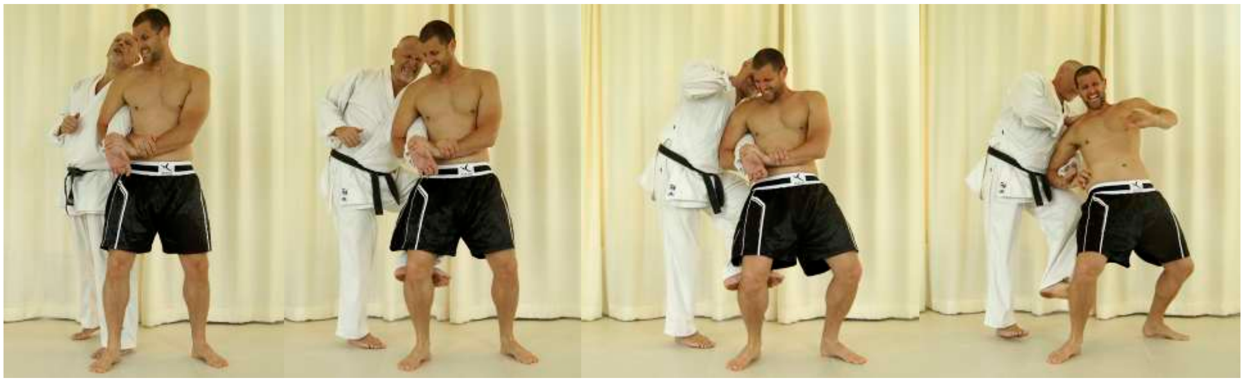
Knee Stomp after kick deflection, when having gained the opponent's back; finish with a powerful Forearm Strike to the throat

When you 'have' the assailant's back, you can also stomp the back of the knee of his rear leg



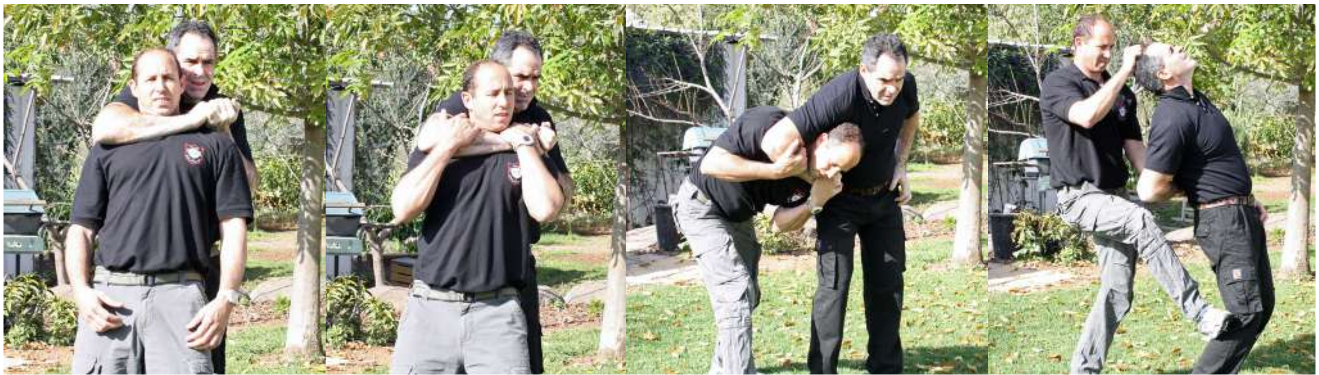
Two things must be remembered about the Stomp: Drill it and Use it!

For example, if you find yourself getting caught in a 'come-along' arm-lock, immediately stomp the back of the opponent's knee.



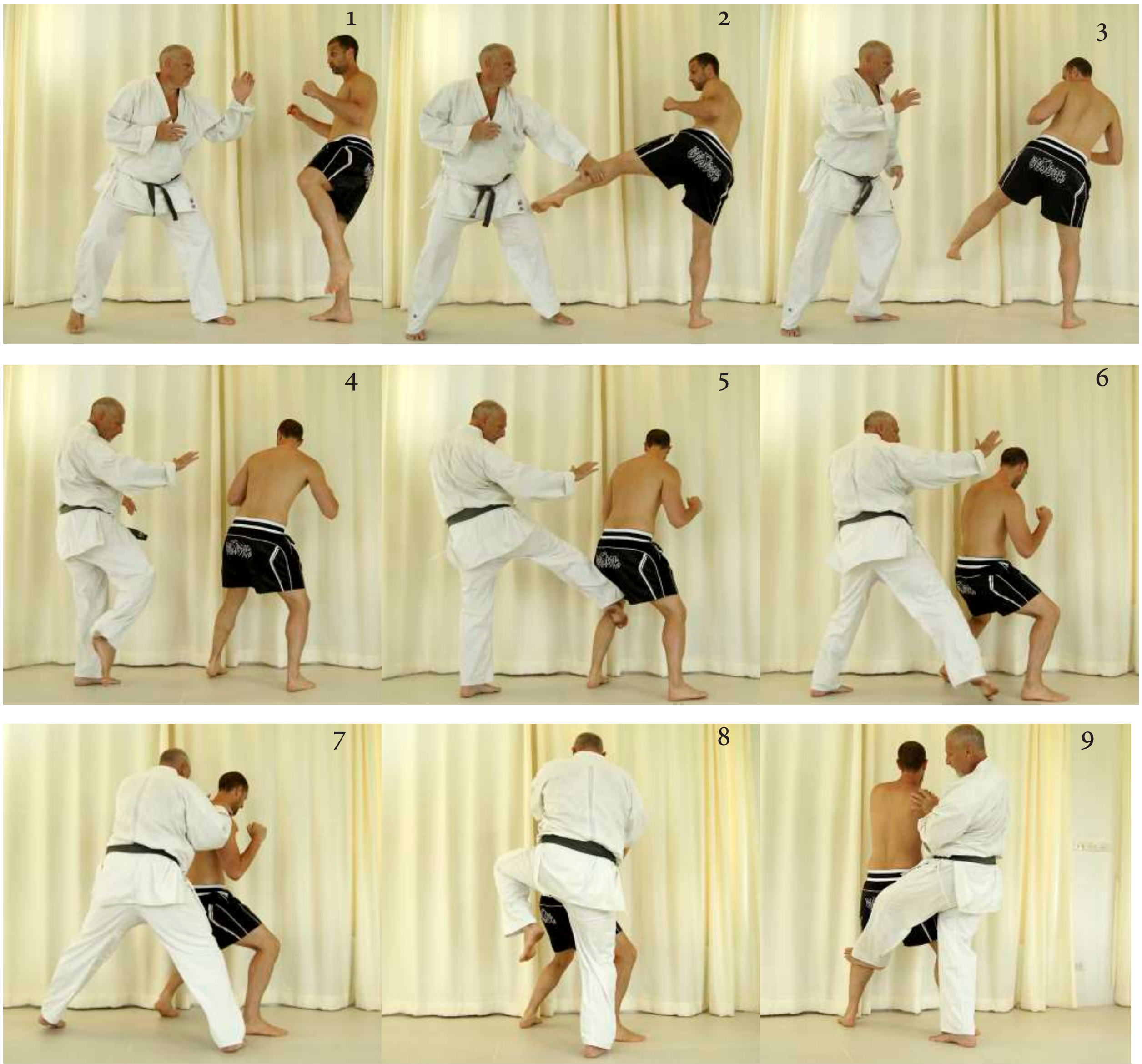
Stomp against an Arm-lock

The next Photos illustrate a Krav Maga release from the early setting-up of a standing Rear Choke: You have to react immediately and grab the choking arm. Then strike the attacker with a Buttocks Strike to the groin area and a Stomp on his foot. You can then make use of his pain to go into classic release that gets to his back in armlock position. Grab his hair to pull his head back and stomp the back of his knee.



Classic release from rear choke attempt, ending with a back-of-the-knee Stomp

The last Photo series, at the top of next page, illustrates the *Stomp* in a 'Retzev' follow-up, after blocking and redirecting an assailant's kick. Low Kick to the knee joint, Palm Strike and shoulder grab, and then Stomp to the back of the knee. The opponent is now totally at your mercy for further blows.



Stomp Kick after redirecting an attacker's Roundhouse and low-kicking the knee of the landing leg

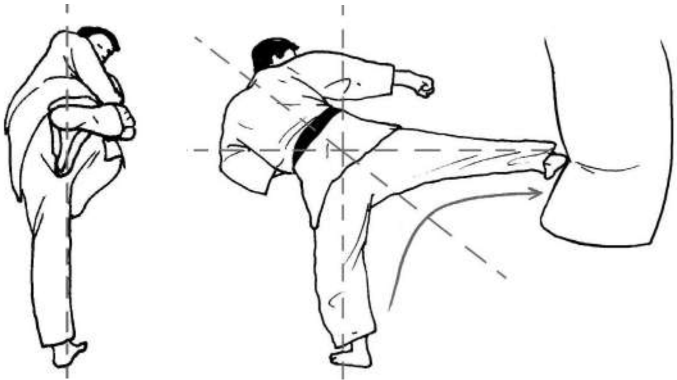
בתחבולות תעשה לך מלחמה

"By way of deception, thou shalt do war."
~The Bible, Proverbs 24:6

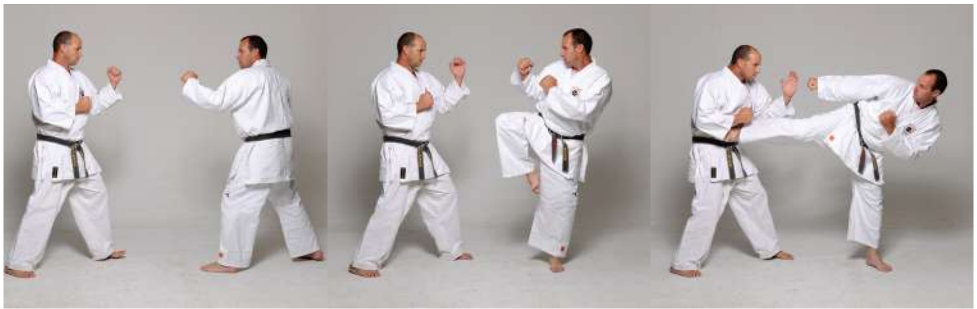
4.7. THE PENETRATING SIDE KICK

The Penetrating Side Kick is one of the most powerful Martial Arts Kicks, because it maximizes the use of the hips and the lower back muscles. It requires training though, as the power comes from good technique and from the well-times pushing of the hips.

The technical Penetrating Side Kick



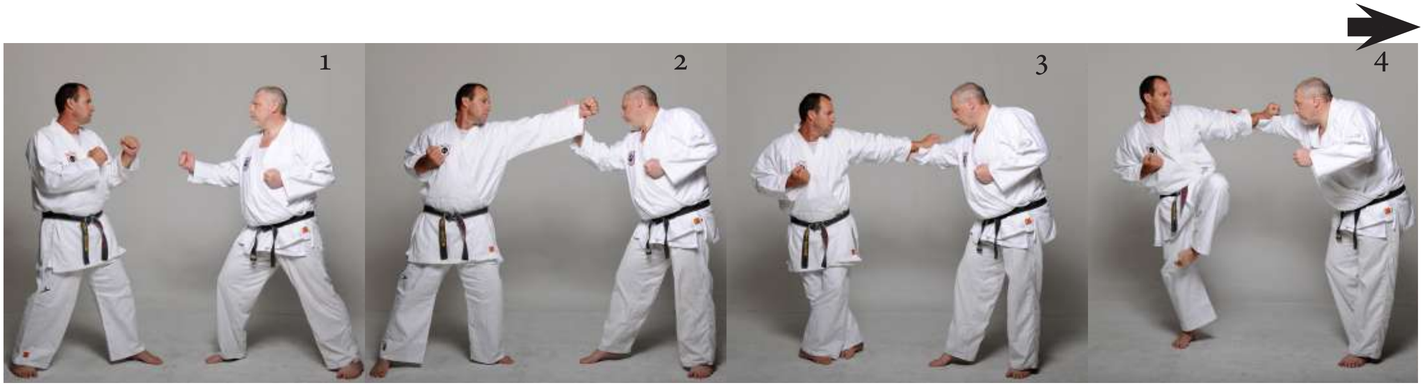
Body alignment position for good Side Kick technique



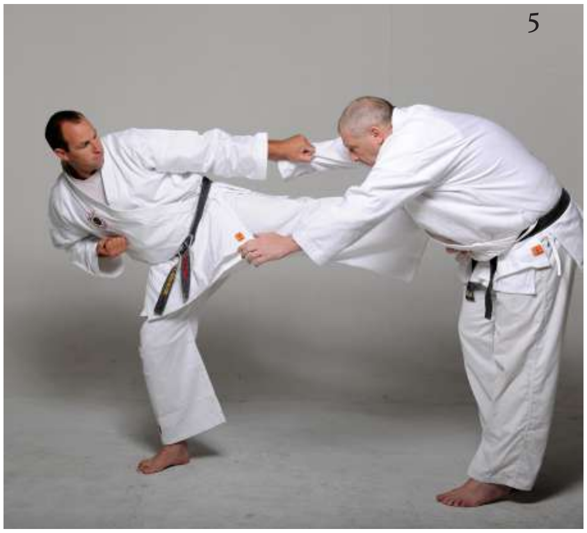
A powerful kick that requires good technique

Requires drilling, but a powerful kick indeed!

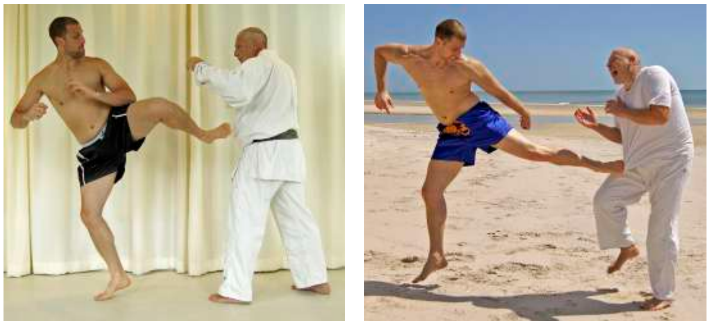
Krav Maga will normally use the ***front-leg version***, generally with an aggressive forward hop. It keeps the fighter generally well protected during execution. The Kick will target the hip joint, the lower abdomen and the lower floating ribs. More experienced fighters will also target the armpit and the higher ribs, but it deviates from the 'no high kicks'-principle. The very best version is in fact presented separately further on, as ***the Low version*** targeting the knee.



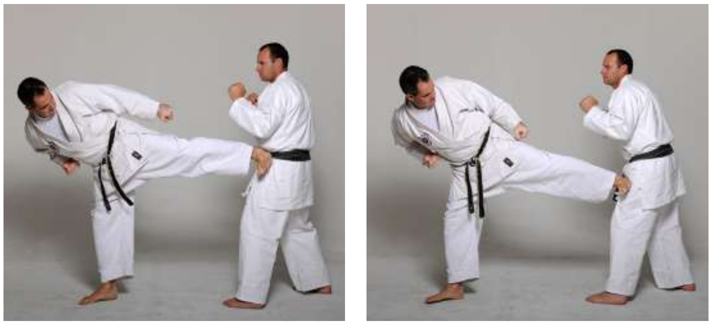
…



An applied offensive **front-leg** *Penetrating Side Kick: note the cross step and the feint to cause the opponent to open his ribs*

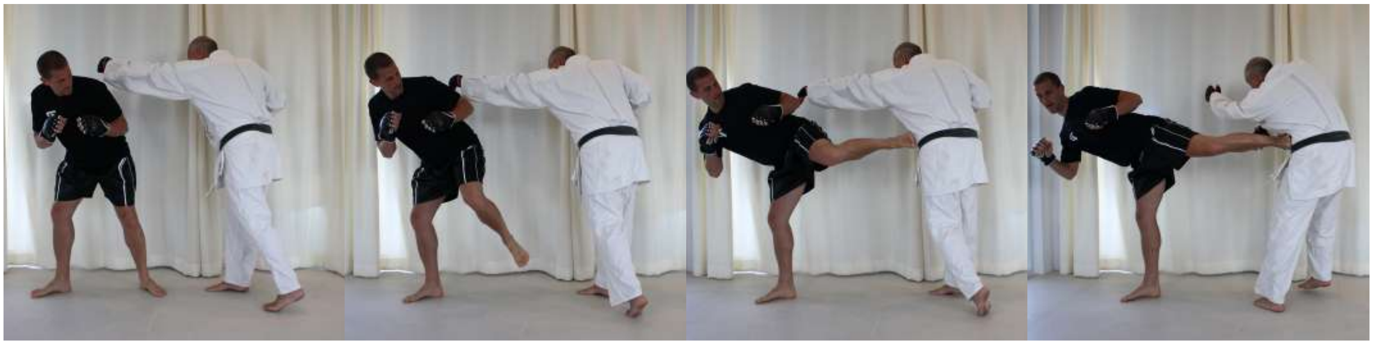


Hopping into the front-leg Side Kick



Also targeting the hip joint or the upper thigh

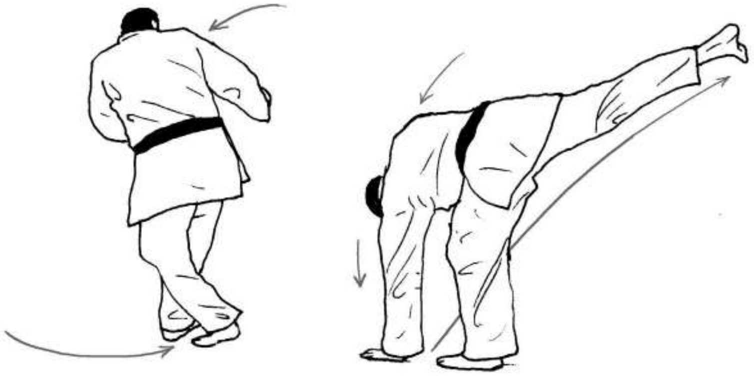
This Kick is a great combination-opener. Its best version (excluding the Low Kick one to follow), is the attack of the *lower ribs* when the opponent ‘offers’ them by punching high.



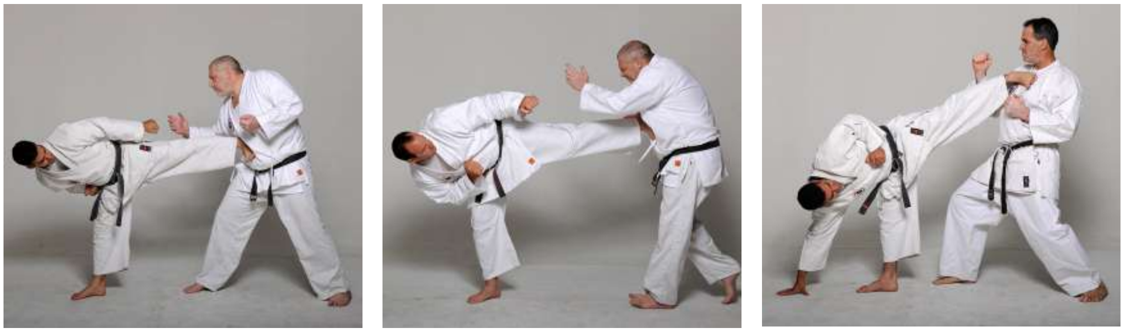
Stop-kick the lower ribs as the opponent ‘opens’ them to punch

A very useful and practical version of the Penetrating Side Kick is the ***Body-bent*** one. By bending away, the fighter can keep his head and upper body away from any danger: like a Stop Punch, a high Kick or a weapon. This version has the advantage of not losing any power. It also helps both speed and power for the less flexible fighters who want to kick at ribs level.

➡



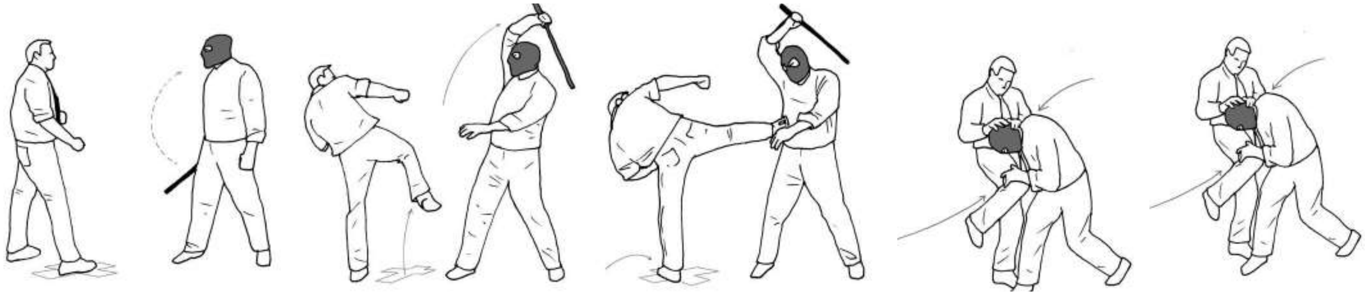
The Hand-on-floor front-leg Side Kick



Three applied Body-bent Penetrating Side Kicks that keep your head away from the danger zone

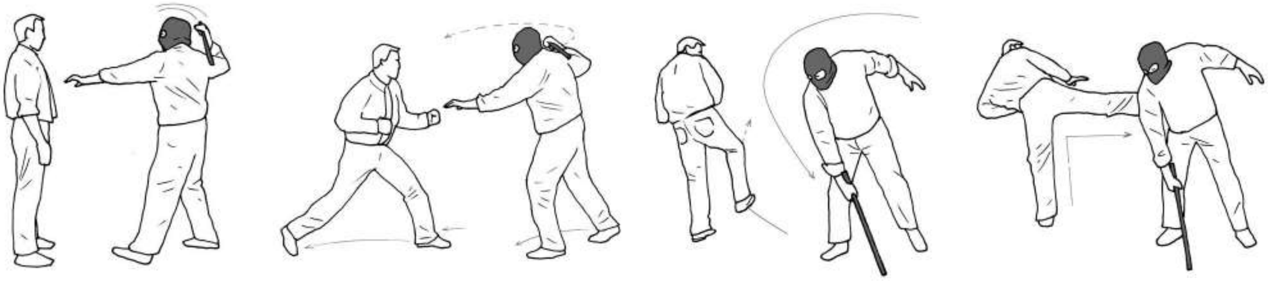
To conclude this section, we shall present two applications against an overhead stick strike. (**1**) In the first (preferable) option, you stop-kick the ribs presented by the assailant as he arms his strike by lifting the stick up; you pre-empt the attack…
(**2**) In the second example, you are too late for a Stop Kick: evade the stick rearwards and outwards, and then come back in to kick the ribs presented by the momentum of the stick strike.

1



Preempt the attack by kicking as the assailant lifts his stick; follow-up with an Elbow Strike to the neck and a Knee Strike to the face, and…

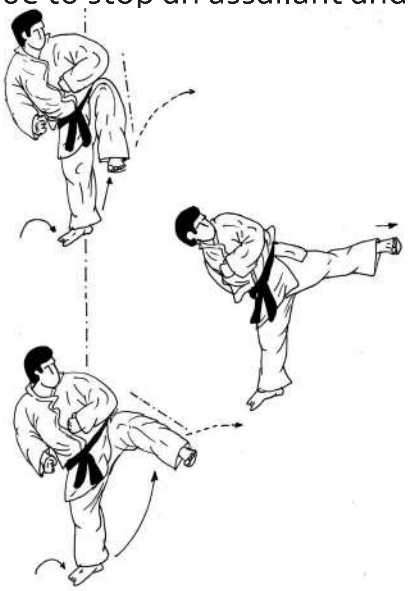
2



Evade the downward stick strike and kick the ribs presented by the momentum of the missed attack

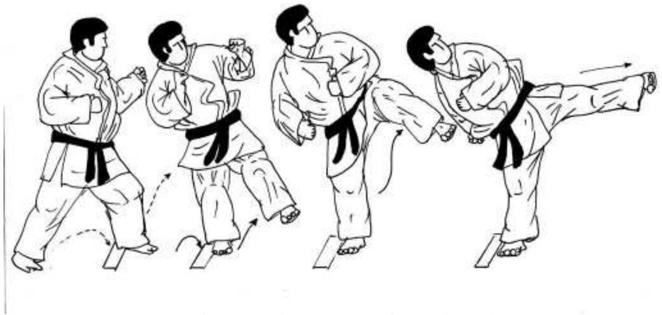
4.8. THE PUSHING SIDE STOP KICK

The 'Pushing' version of the Side Kick is also a great technique to stop an assailant and push him away, before you can retake the initiative. It is more powerful than the Pushing Front Stop Kick, and it should be preferred when possible. Just like for the Front Stop Kick, the *Pushing Side Stop Kick* gets into chambering position further on its trajectory, in order to save time and keep the foot between you and the attacker; this is illustrated by the comparative Drawing.

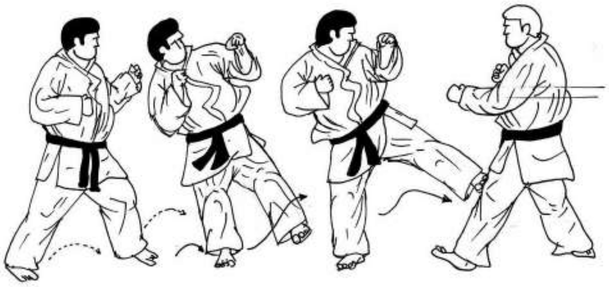


Comparison of Chambering position of the regular Penetrating Side Kick and the Stop Pushing Side Kick

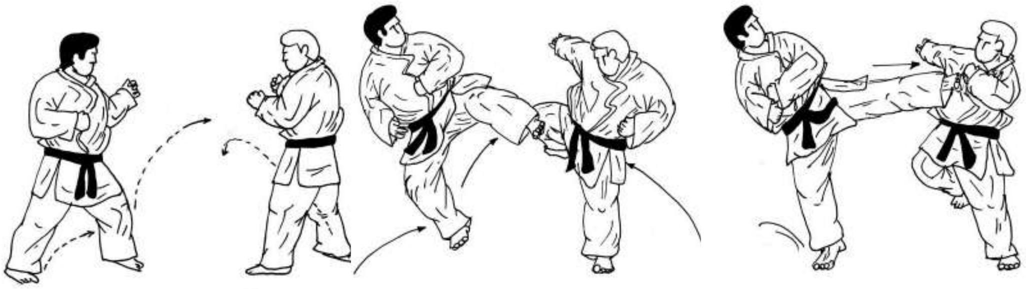
In order to stop a forward momentum, it will have to target *the ribs, the solar plexus, the hip joint or the lower abdomen*. Its best stopping version though, will be the Low version targeting the front knee of the attacker. The ideal 'high' version of the kick should target the lower ribs of a punching attacker who does not protect them. But the technique is also excellent at stopping kicking attacks in their tracks.



Pushing Side Stop Kick to the ribs

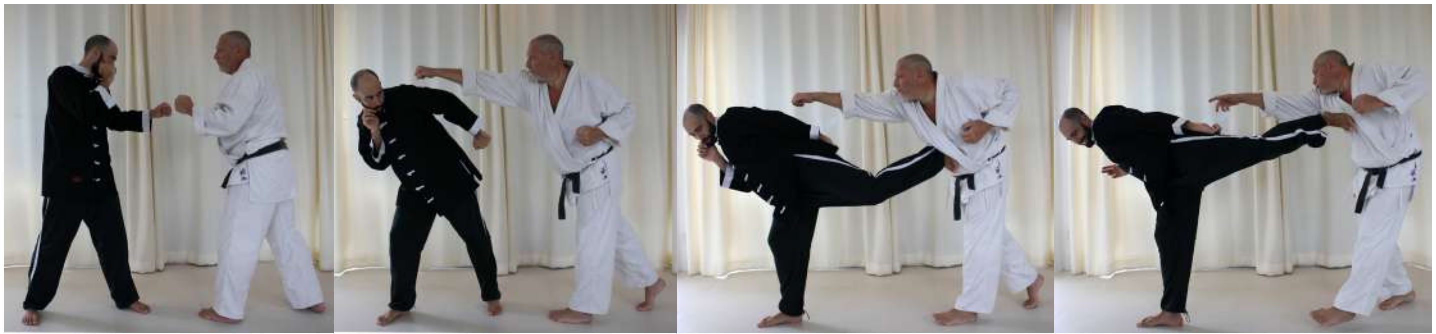


Pushing Side Stop kick to the knee



Stopping a kicking attack and pushing the assailant away

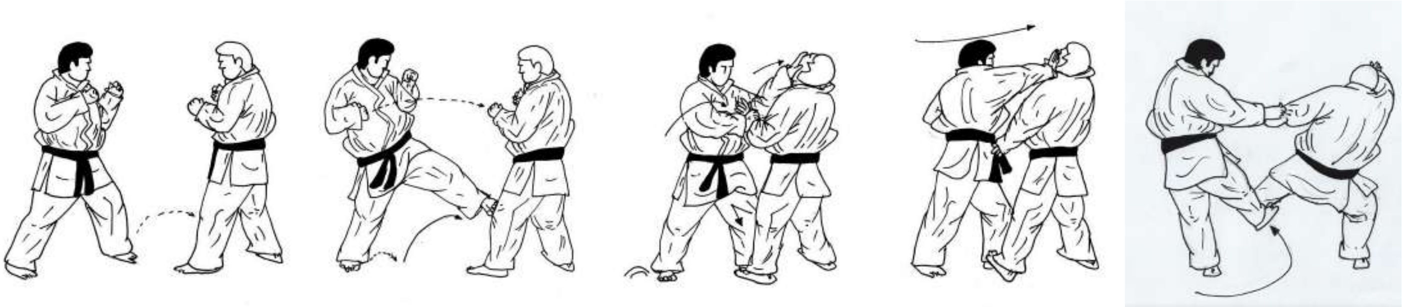
The Body-bent variation of the Side Kick is relevant to the Pushing Stop version too:



The Body-bent version of the Pushing Stop Kick has the advantage of keeping your head away from danger

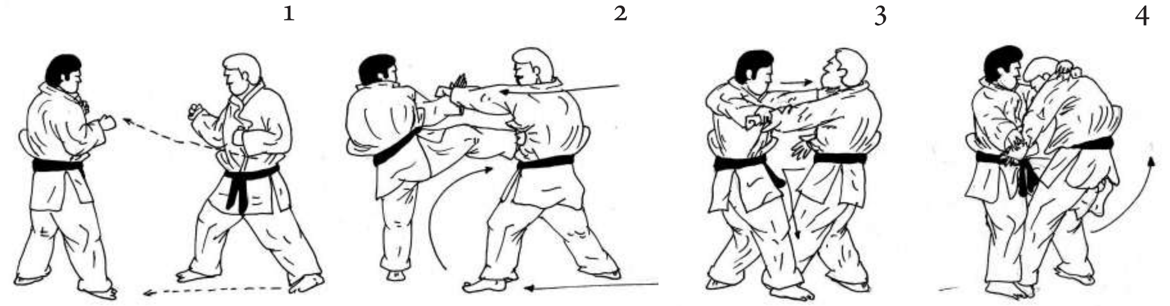
Once you have stopped and/or pushed back your attacker, remember that you should aggressively pursue him in order to prevent him from taking back the initiative. Remember: ***Retzev***!

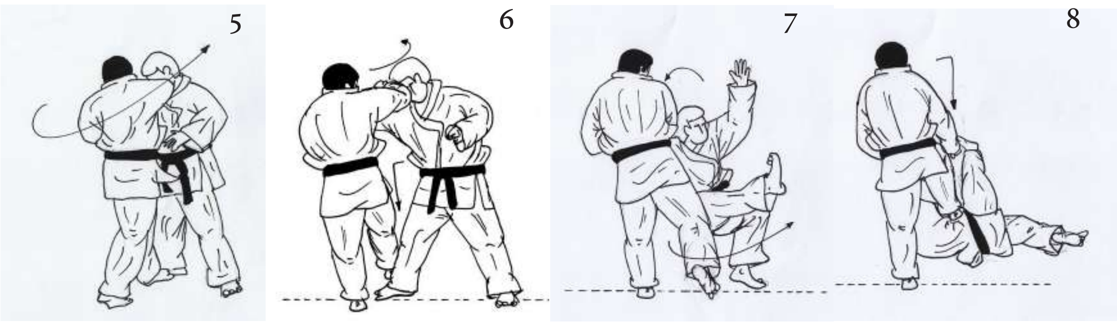
1



Preempt the opponent's step or attack, strike twice with the palm to his face while keeping control of his lead hand, take him down with an ankle Kick Throw

2

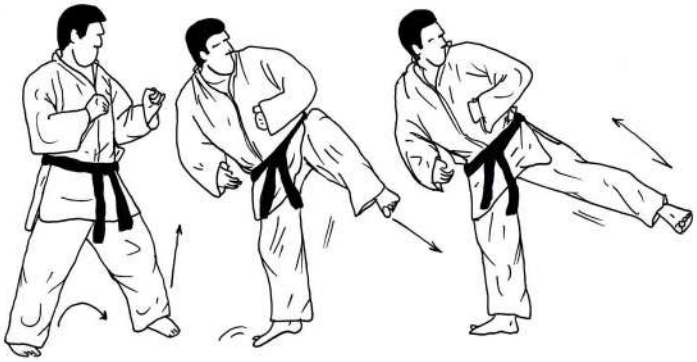




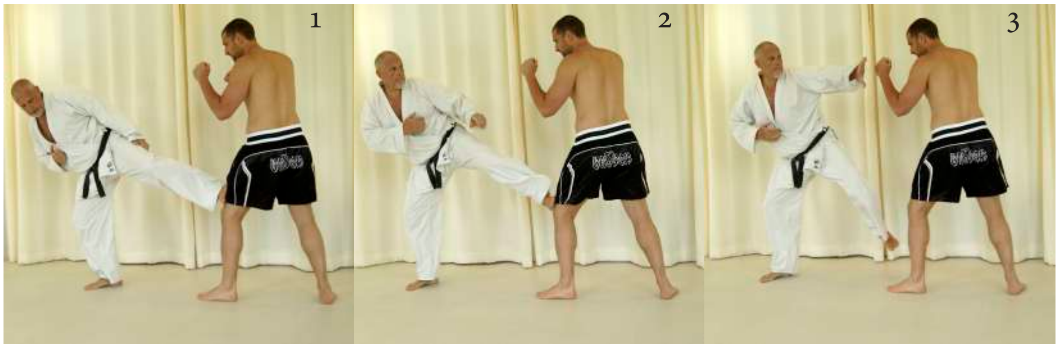
Stop-kick the assailant in the ribs as he develops his punching attacks; follow-up with a Throat Strike and a Groin Kick; then a Circular Elbow Strike that turns into an Outer Reap Takedown; finish him up with a Stomp to the ribs

4.9. THE LOW SIDE KICK

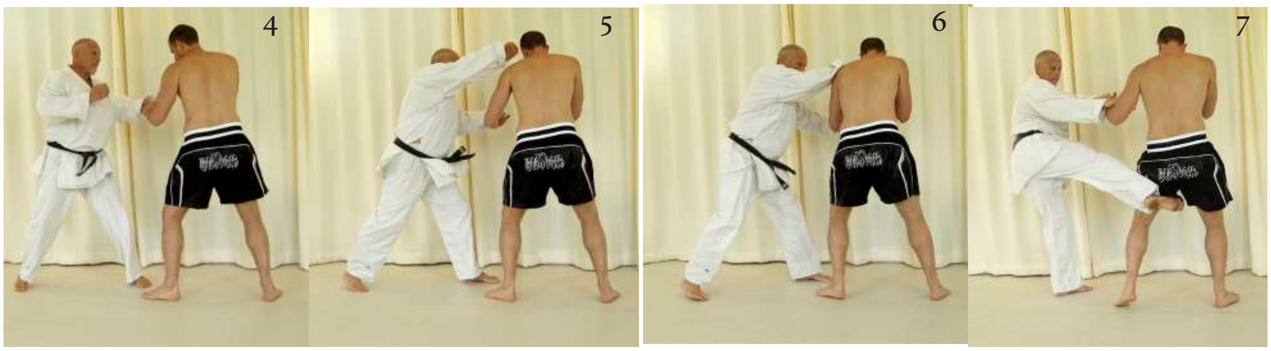
This is the most practical version of the Side Kick, and one of the most useful in Self-defense. It was, reportedly, *Bruce Lee*'s favorite Kick, used as an Obstruction Kick, a Stop Kick or an Offensive Attack Kick. We have seen a few examples in the previous section, and the principles are identical to those of the execution of the higher version to the hips or ribs.



The technical Low Side Kick



The Low Side Kick is a perfect obstruction maneuver to help you get safely close to the opponent and start your Retzev

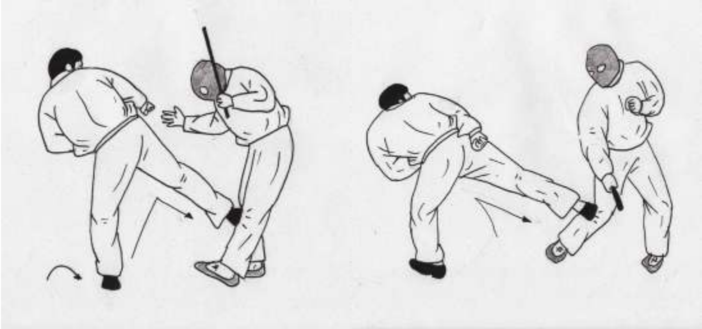


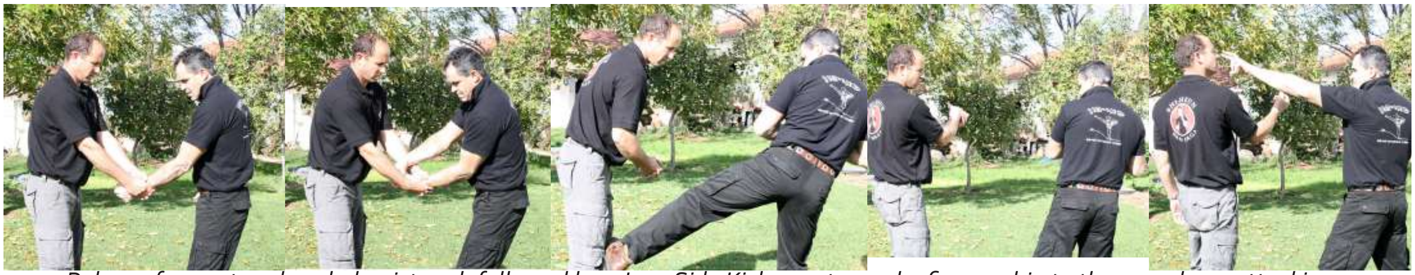
The Kick is quite stealthy, very powerful, very fast and it targets the very sensitive *knee or upper shin*. Krav Maga uses the front-leg version with minimal chambering. It concentrates on ***speed*** and on the ***penetration*** of the target: you must kick fast and a few inches '*into*' the knee joint.

Kick a few inches into the knee

Like with all Low Kicks (and even all Kicks), you should drill a ***stealthy delivery***: making sure that the upper body does not give any hint of the impending and developing attack. Drill in front of the mirror.

The only important target is the knee joint, from all possible angles, but you must learn to kick 'through' and not just slap the surface of the knee. The upper shin can be a target if the opponent's leg is straight, and the lower thigh can be a target for the Stop version of the Kick. But you should drill the automatic targeting of the knee at all times.

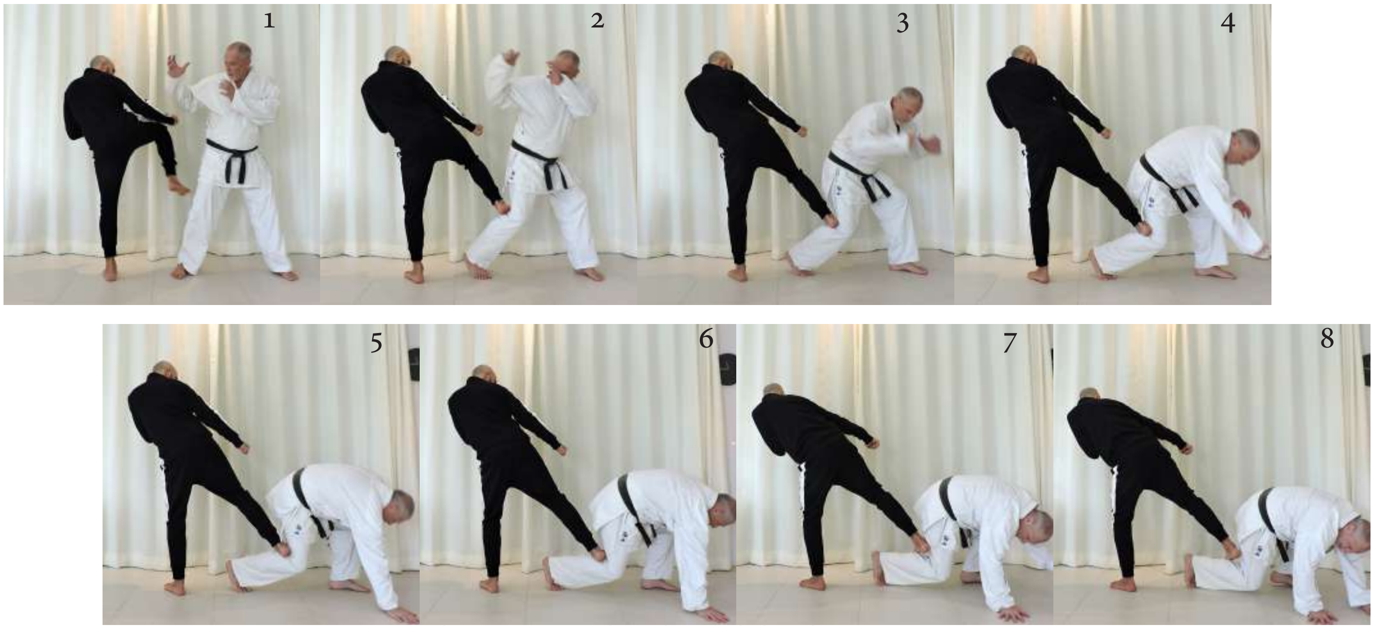

Preempt a stick attack with a Hopping Low Stop side kick to the knee; follow-up with another hard Low Side kick and start your Retzev…


Release from a two-handed wrist grab followed by a Low Side Kick counter and a finger whip to the eyes; keep attacking until the opponent is neutralized

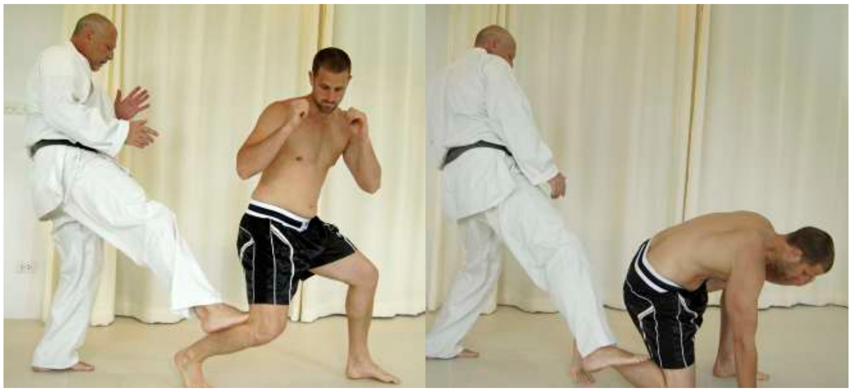
"A righteous man falls down seven times and gets up."
~King Solomon, Proverbs, 24:16.

4.10. THE STOMPING SIDE KICK

The Stomping Side Kick is identical to the regular Low Side Kick until the moment of impact. From then on, instead of penetrating for a few inches and then chambering back, it keeps going down and 'through' *until it reaches the floor and crushes the knee into it.* This is a debilitating attack, generally directed at the back of the knee. It works as well when attacking the sides of the knee, and it is then even more damaging for the joint. Attacking the front knee of a straightened leg is also an option, but it is an extremely dangerous Kick, with the potential of causing lifelong serious injuries. Be careful in training and in actual use if warranted. It is certainly not for the faint-hearted.

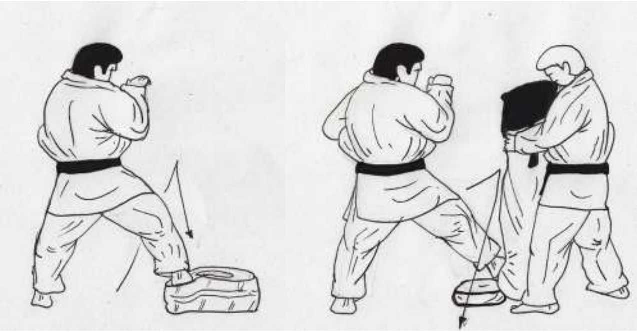


The Stomping Side Kick: simple but devastating



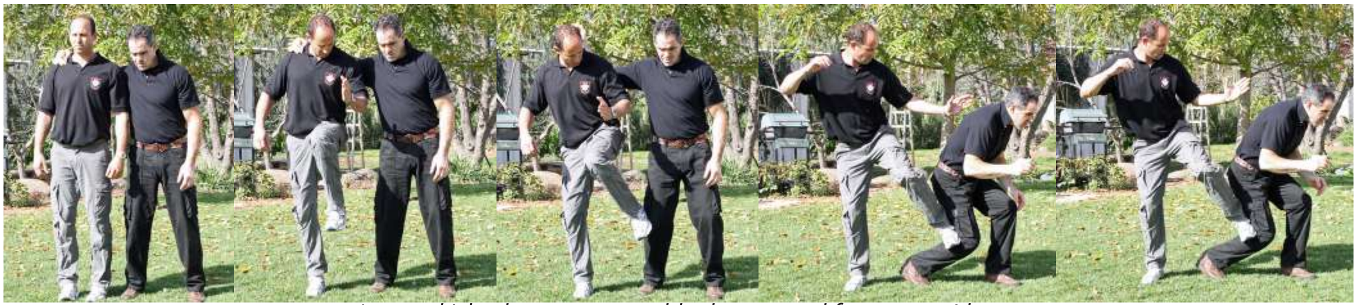
Kick all the way to the ground, and more

It is an important kick to master for self-preservation, and it should be drilled as an all-the-way technique, kicking through and stomping forcefully. Use old tires, focus pads, bags and more for realistic power development.

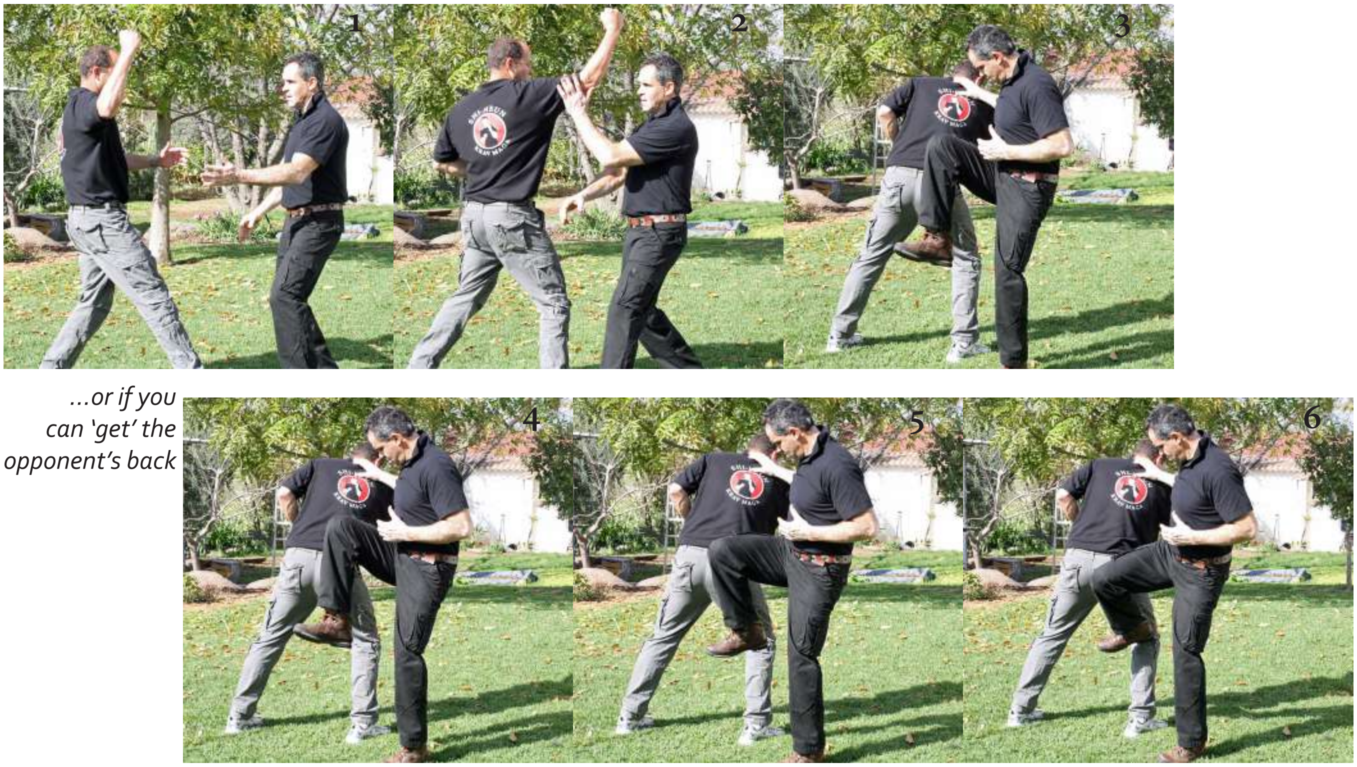


Use props to drill the 'kick-through

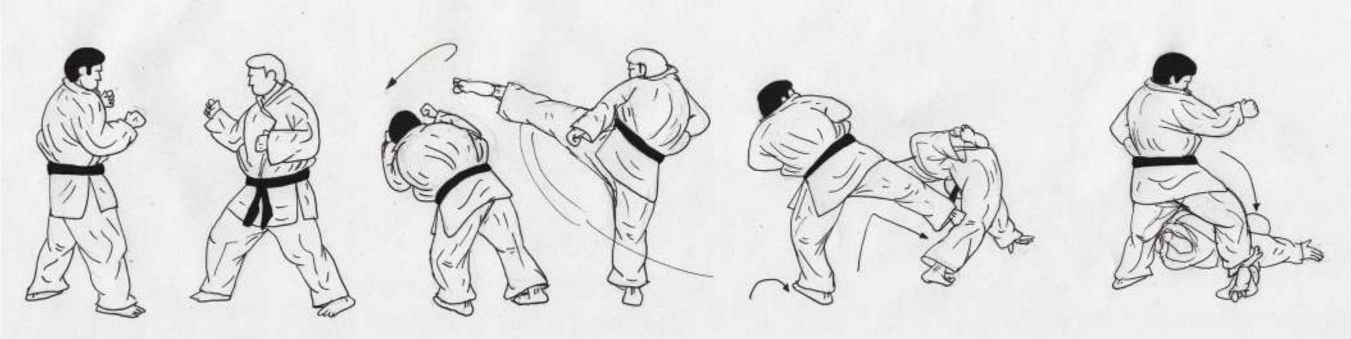
The best way to 'understand' the Kick is to drill applications, like the few ones presented below.



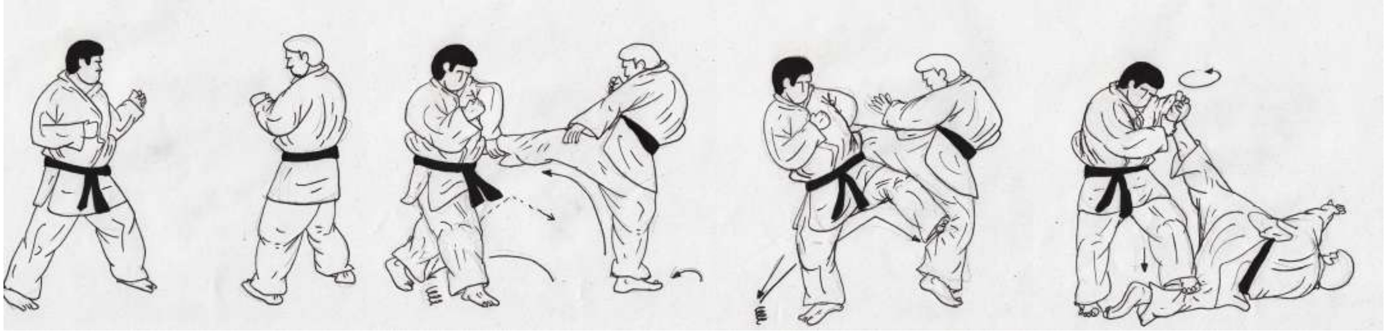
A great kick when you are suddenly accosted from your side…



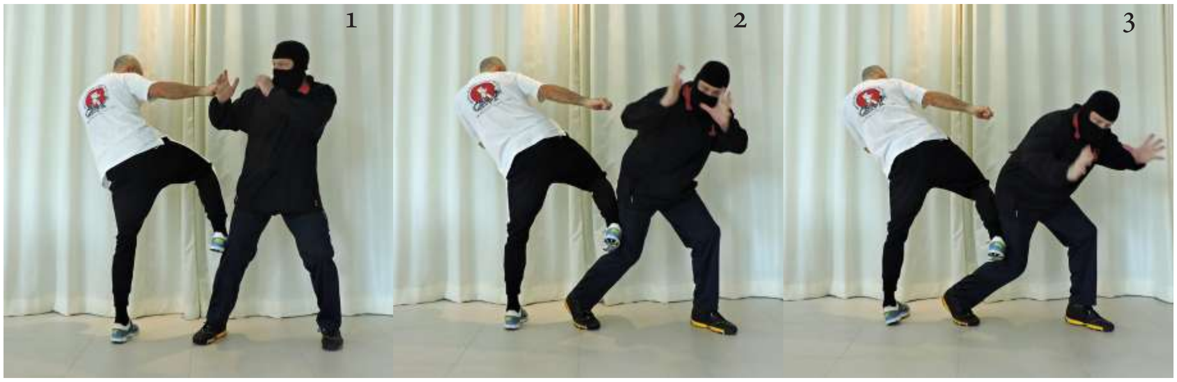
…or if you can 'get' the opponent's back



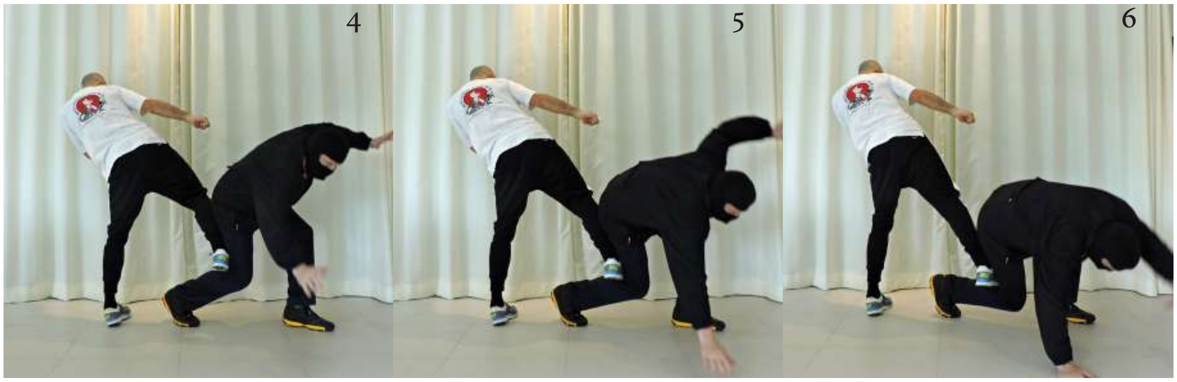
It is also a crippling 'Cutting Kick', crushing the knee of the standing leg of a kicking assailant. Evade and kick…

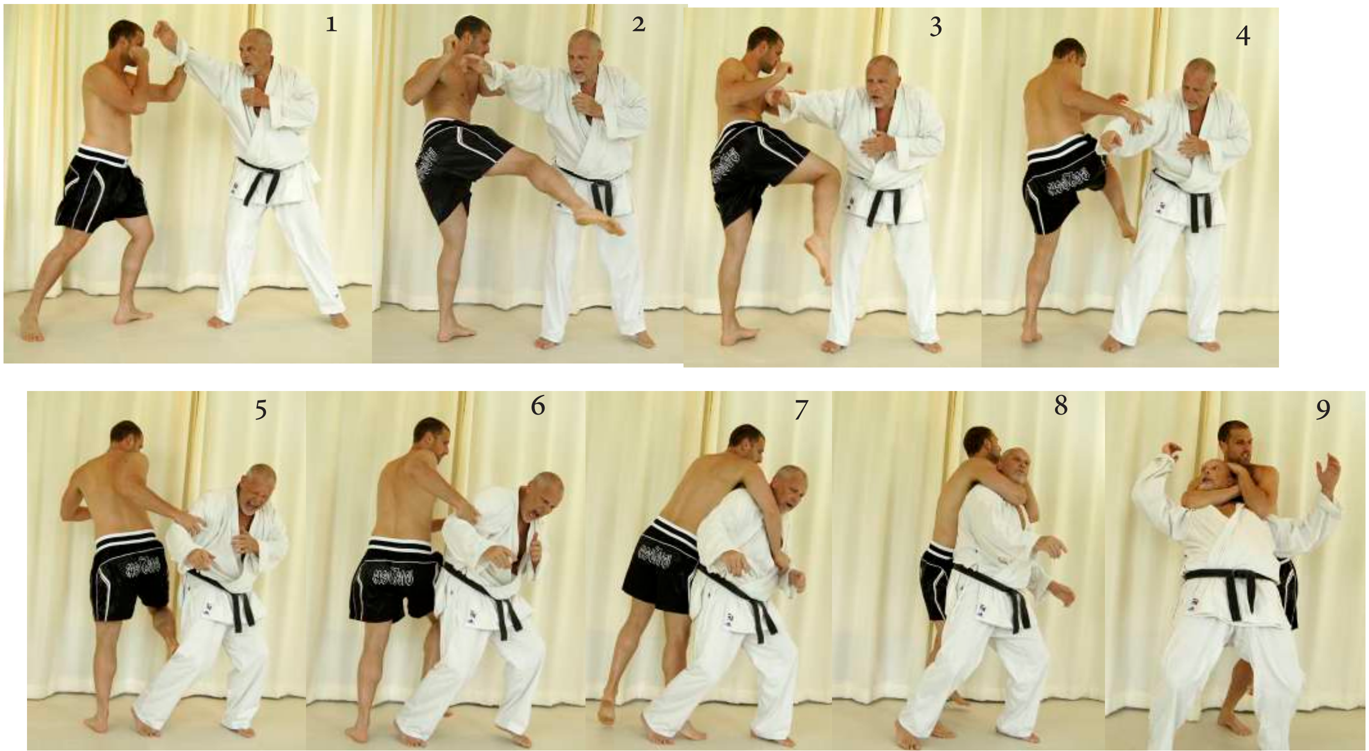


…or Block/Catch and kick!

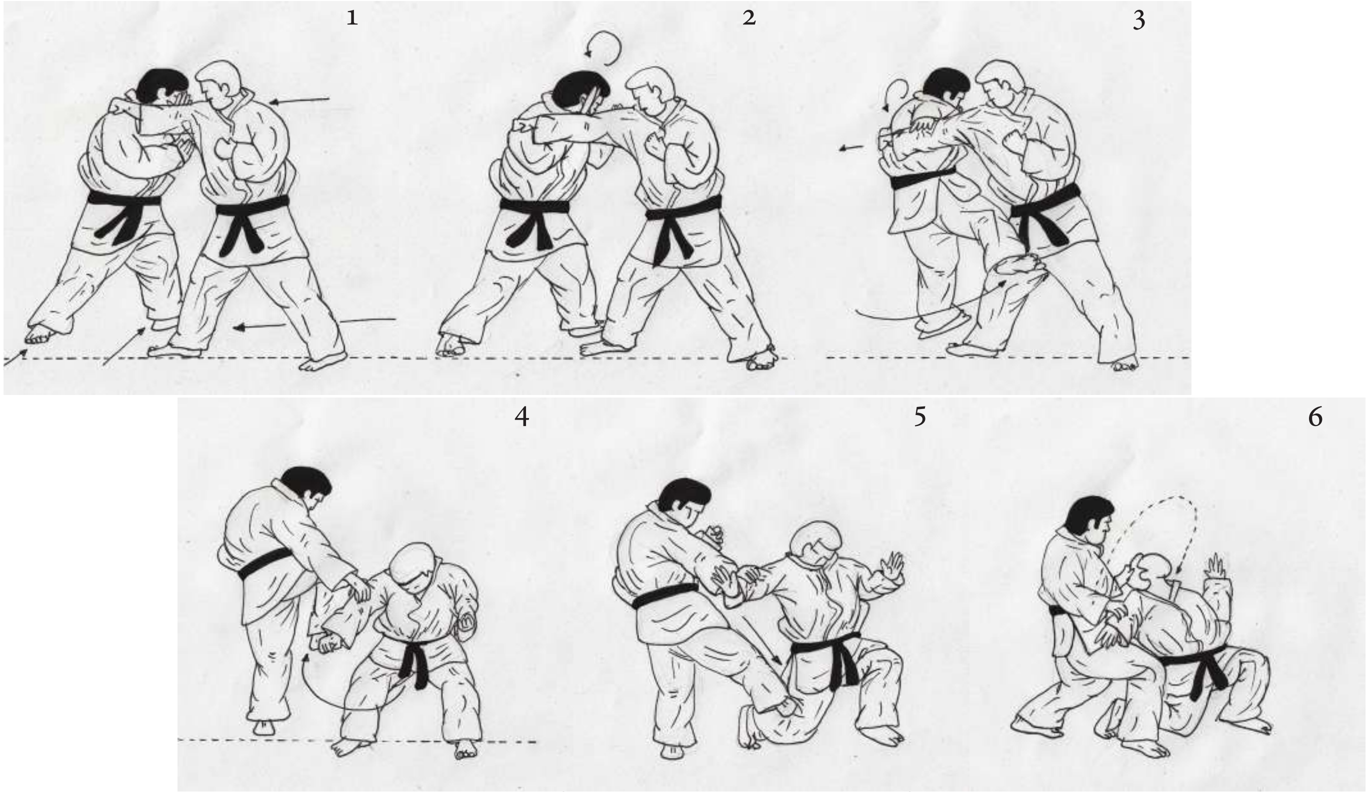


Of course, the kick can be an excellent offensive maneuver. It can be used simply directly.



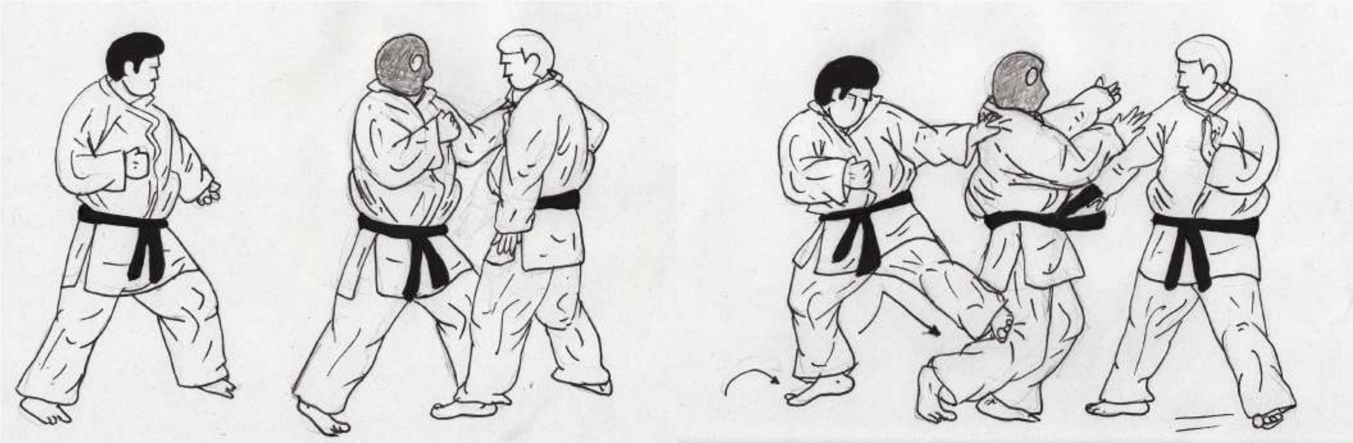


The kick is as useful in the midst of a defensive combination, generally with a forward diagonal evasion. The technique lends itself to pretty mean follow-ups



Another defensive combination with a hard finish

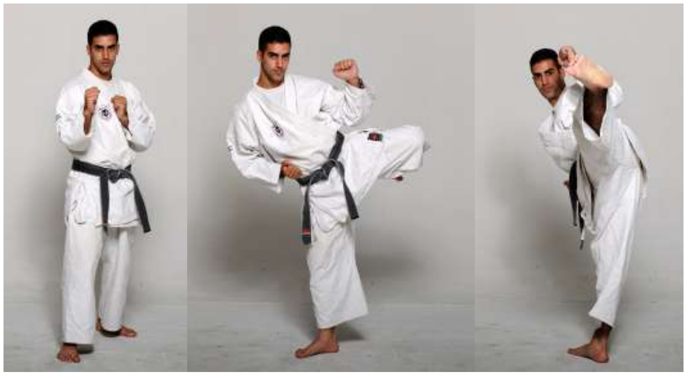
The Stomping Low Kick is also the technique of choice if you must intervene to save a loved one from an assault. Stomping the back of the knee will stop the most determined assailant; of course, keep the *Retzev* if necessary.



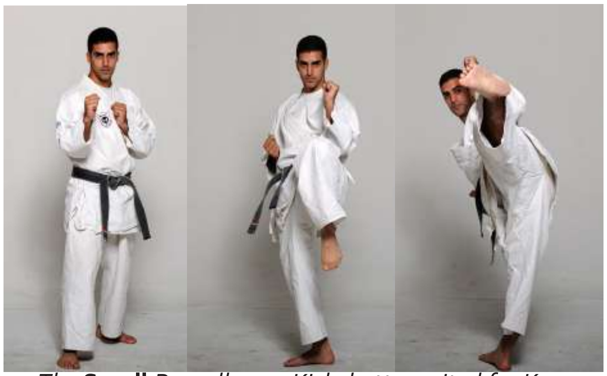
The kick of choice to protect a third party

4.11. THE SMALL ROUNDHOUSE KICK

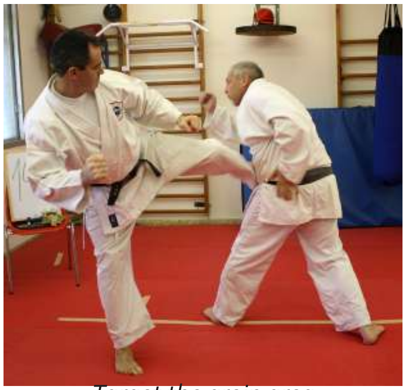
The 'Small' Roundhouse Kick is *Krav Maga*'s Circular Kick. It attacks the sides of an attacker standing in front of you. It differs from Martial Arts' '**Full**' Roundhouse with its restricted chambering in front of the body. This 'small' chambering allows for much more speed and for a more protected execution; it is much less powerful than the 'Full' version though. But in *Krav Maga*, we shall nearly exclusively target the testicles or the front knee, and power is therefore a secondary consideration. But, the serious drilling of this 'Small' version of the Roundhouse Kick will allow to add serious power to the move and then allow for eventually targeting the solar plexus, the lower ribs and the lower back (or the head of a kneeling opponent). All these secondary targets will be made even more vulnerable if you happen to wear hard-soled or hard-tipped shoes.



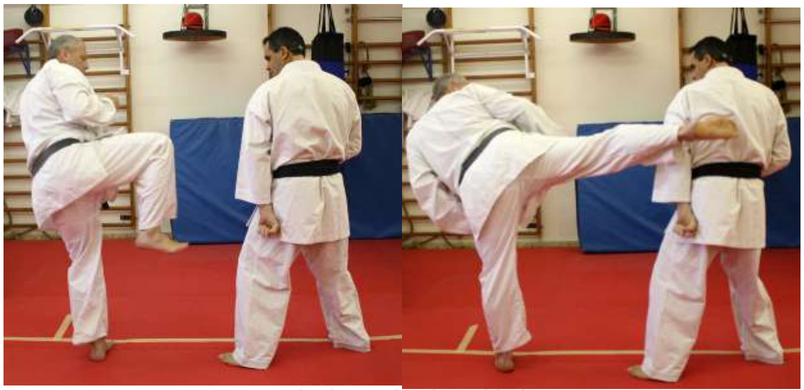
Karate's Full version of the Roundhouse Kick: powerful but slower and unprotected



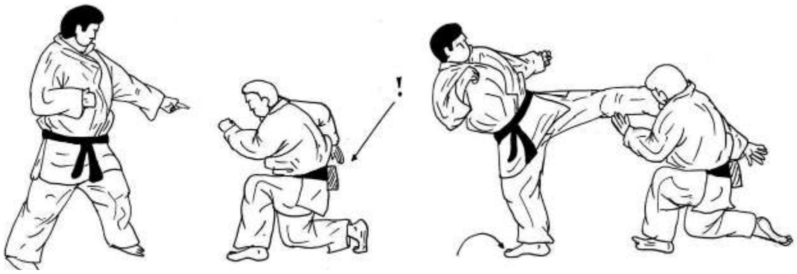
*The **Small** Roundhouse Kick, better suited for Krav Maga*



Target the groin area

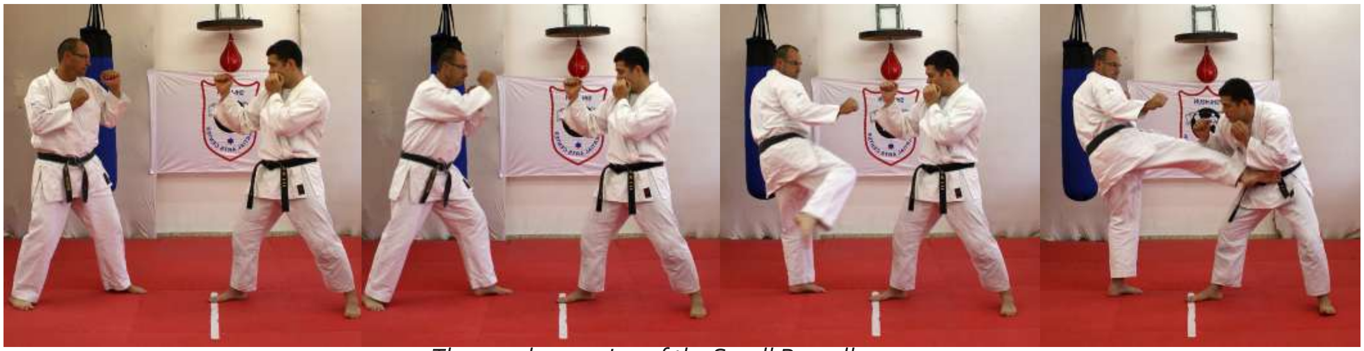


Targeting the lower back and kidneys area

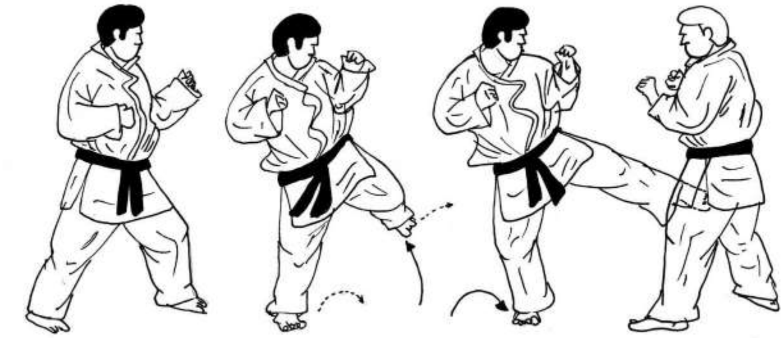


Target the head of a threatening kneeling or standing-up opponent

The Roundhouse Kick is a versatile bread-and-butter Kick and it needs to be drilled in its rear-leg, in its front-leg and in its hopping-forward version. It even has also a great Body-bent version (just like the Side Kick) so important that it will have its own section. Roundhouse Kicks are 'Whipping' Kicks and the fast and powerful *chambering back* is very important to success. But even more important is ***penetration***: do not make the mistake of turning this Kick into a 'slap' surface kick. Before chambering back, it is imperative to kick forcefully *a few inches into* the target. Do not start to slow down before impact for a better pull back. *Accelerate until contact and go through before whipping back!*



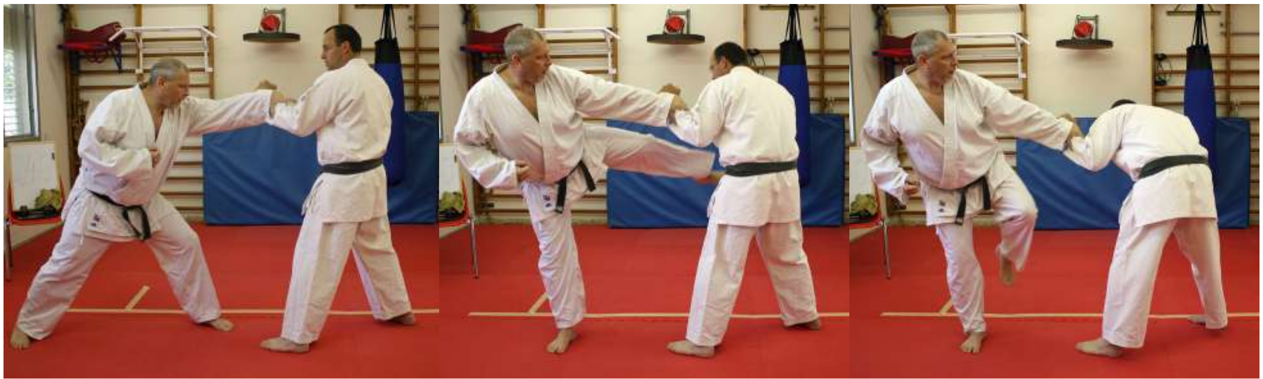
The rear-leg version of the Small Roundhouse



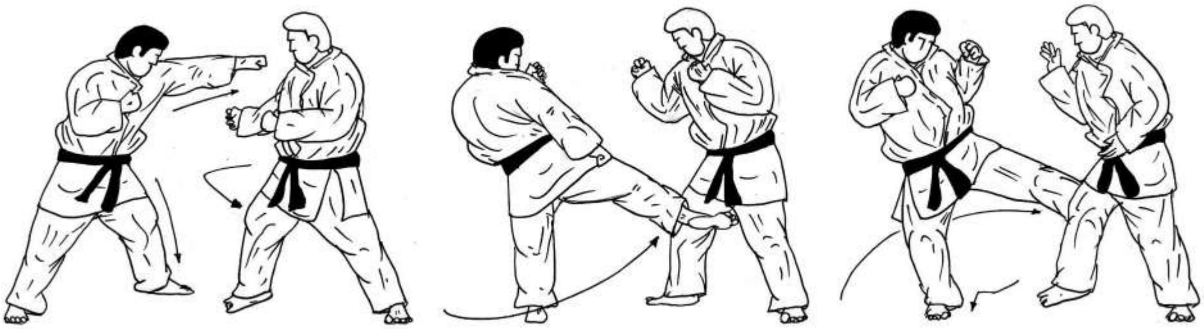
The front-leg Hopping version; note that the hop happens while the leg is already chambering

All of the above are reasons why this Kick must be drilled for ***speed and 'kick-through'*** against a focus pad held by a partner. It should also be drilled for automatic going to the opponent's ***groin*** when in range, and this in the ***stealthiest*** way possible (no upper body telegraphing). Drill, drill, drill! A few illustrative Applications will follow.

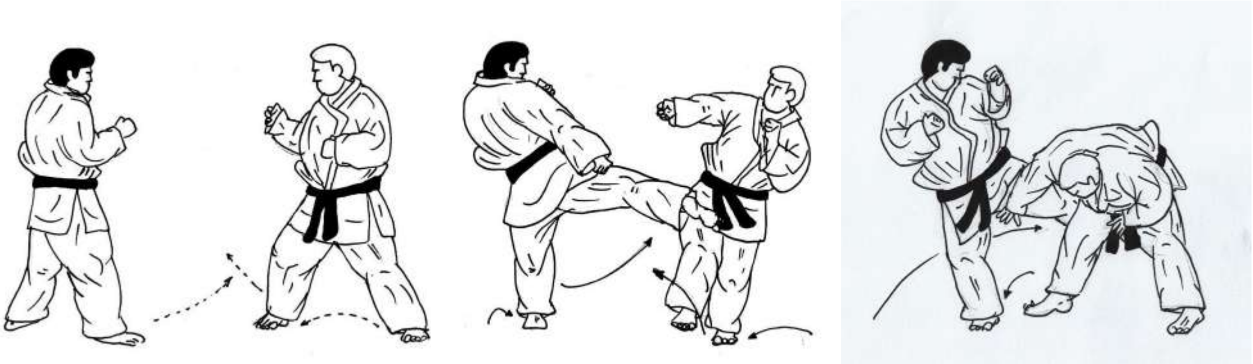
Drill the Kick with a partner holding a focus pad to learn to kick 'into' the target (No need to kick high though)



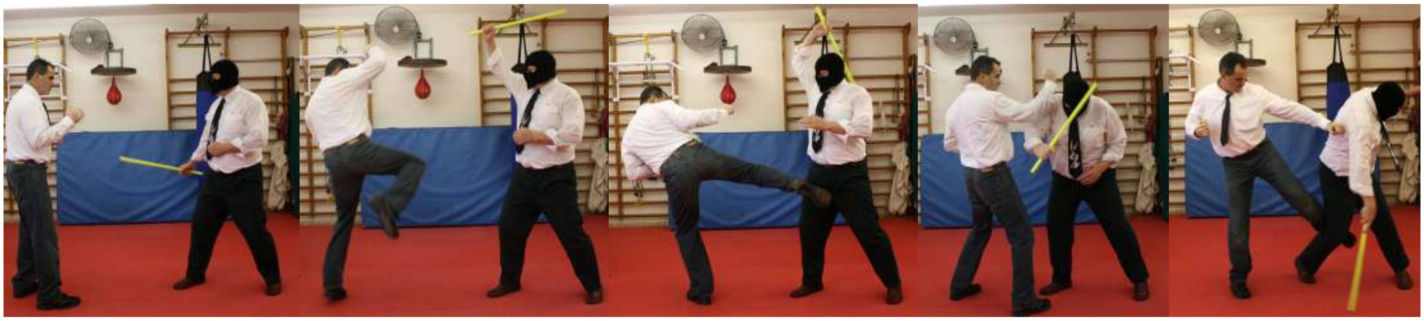
An Offensive application of the front-leg Hopping version: lunge to catch his front wrist, in order to draw his attention away from the targeted groin and to neutralize a possible blocking or countering han



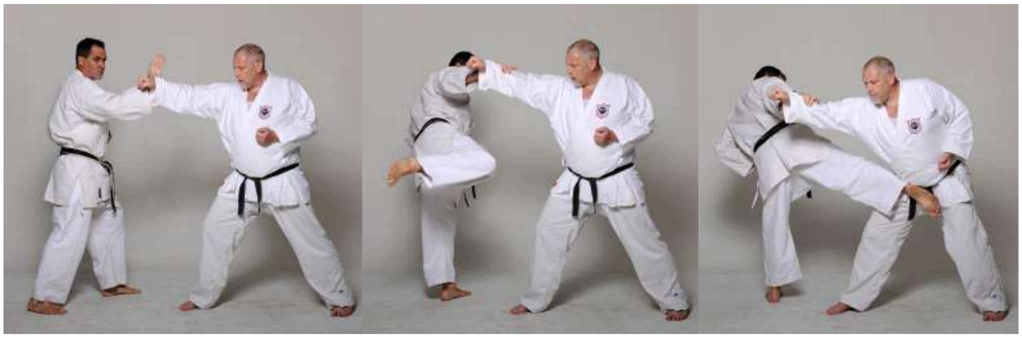
An Offensive application of the more powerful rear-leg version: Draw his attention up with a lunging Jab, and kick the groin; follow up with a Low Kick to the knee, and keep going



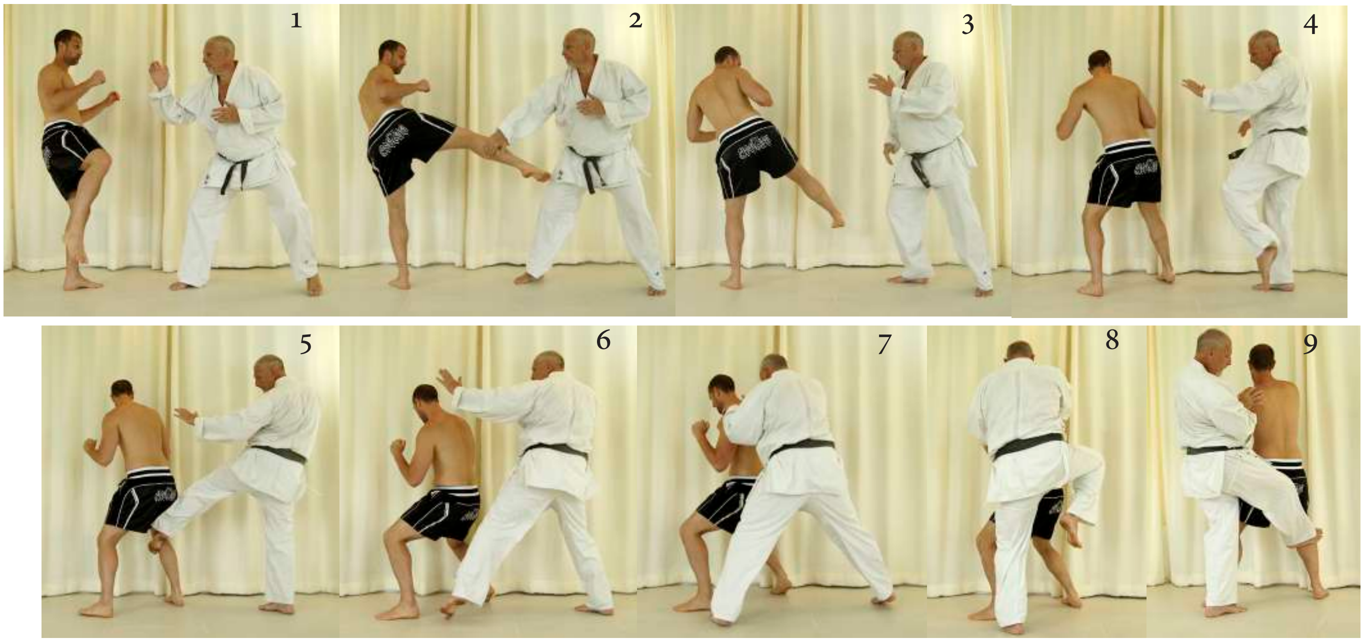
It is also a great Preemptive Kick: kick the assailant's groin in the middle of his kicking hop forward; again, start you following Retzev with a Low Kick to the knee

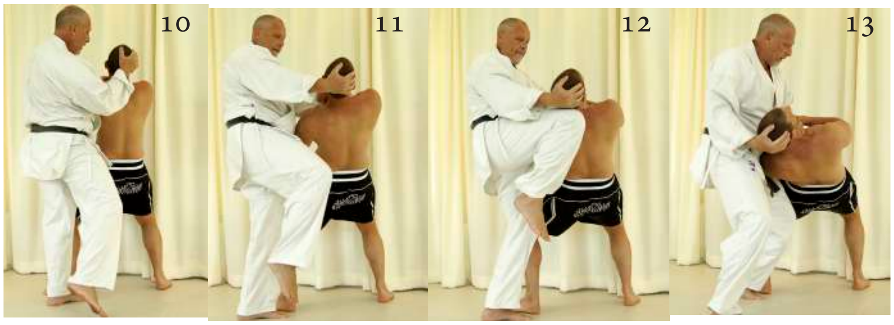


The Hopping front-leg version is a surprising Preemptive Kick because it is unexpectedly going forward towards an attacking opponent; for example, in an overhead stick attack



Also a great Defensive Kick: after evading out a Punch

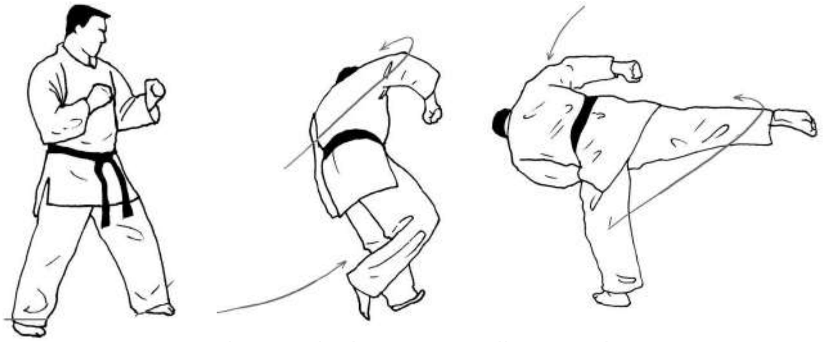




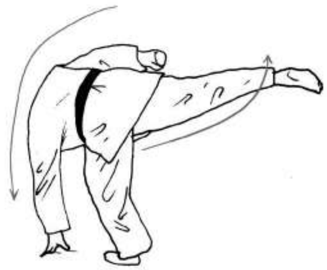
Defensive Kick against a Kick: block an deflect the opponent's kick in order to powerfully roundhouse-kick the knee of the attacking leg; you could follow up by 'owning' his back for a Stomp in back of same knee and a Knee Strike to the head you are pulling violently back and down

4.12. The Bent-body Long Roundhouse Kick

This version of the Small Roundhouse Kick has its own section because of its importance. Bending away while developing the Groin Roundhouse Kick has the same advantage as for the Side Kick: it keeps your head and trunk away from attacks or counterattacks. It makes the kick safer. But, for the Roundhouse Kick, it also allows for a hip push during execution. This hip push, together with bending the standing leg, gives the Kick a longer range. Hence the 'Long' in ***Body-bent Long Roundhouse Kick***. This execution of the Kick is surprisingly long, and therefore it will more easily hit the opponent's groin. Longer, safer; what is not to like?

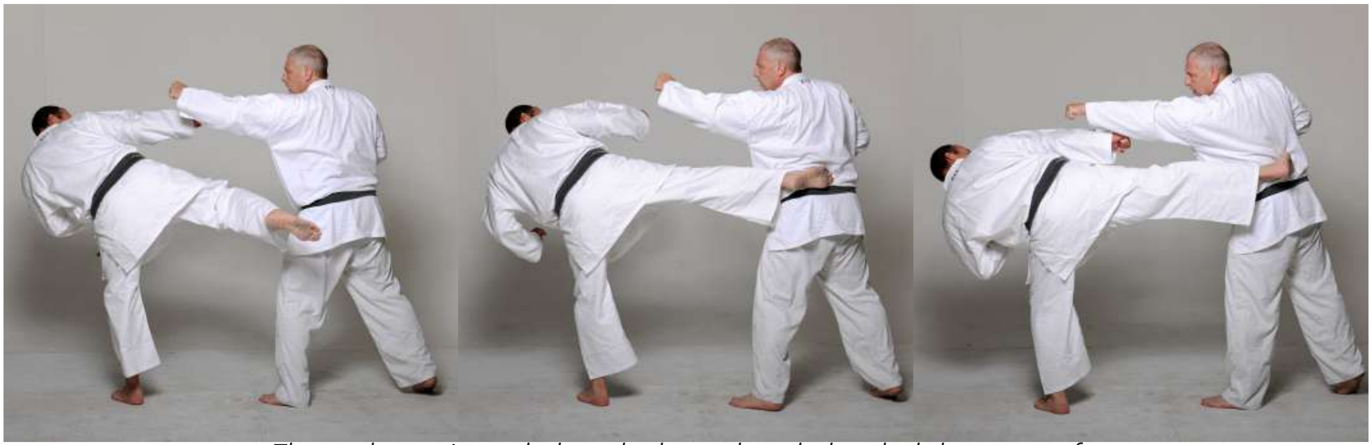


The Bent-body Long Roundhouse Kick

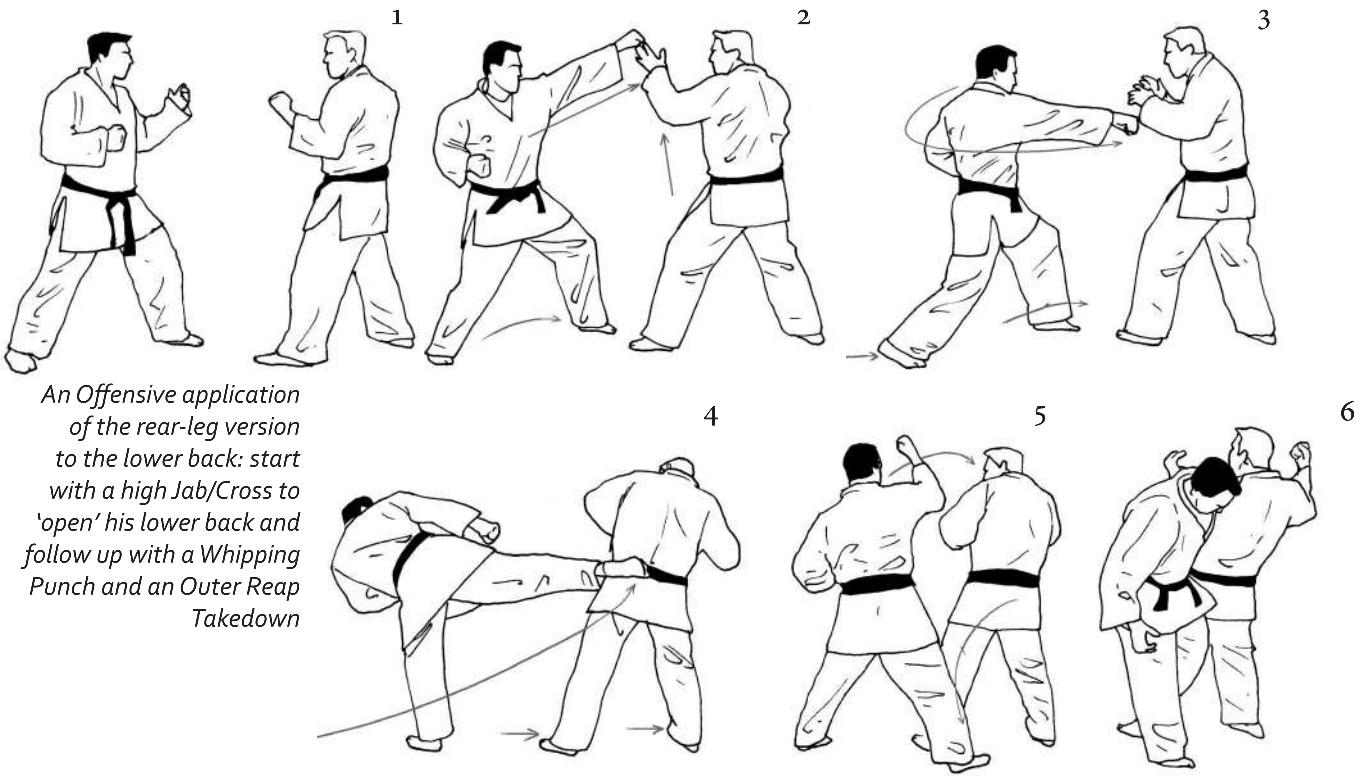


The 'Hand-on-floor' version

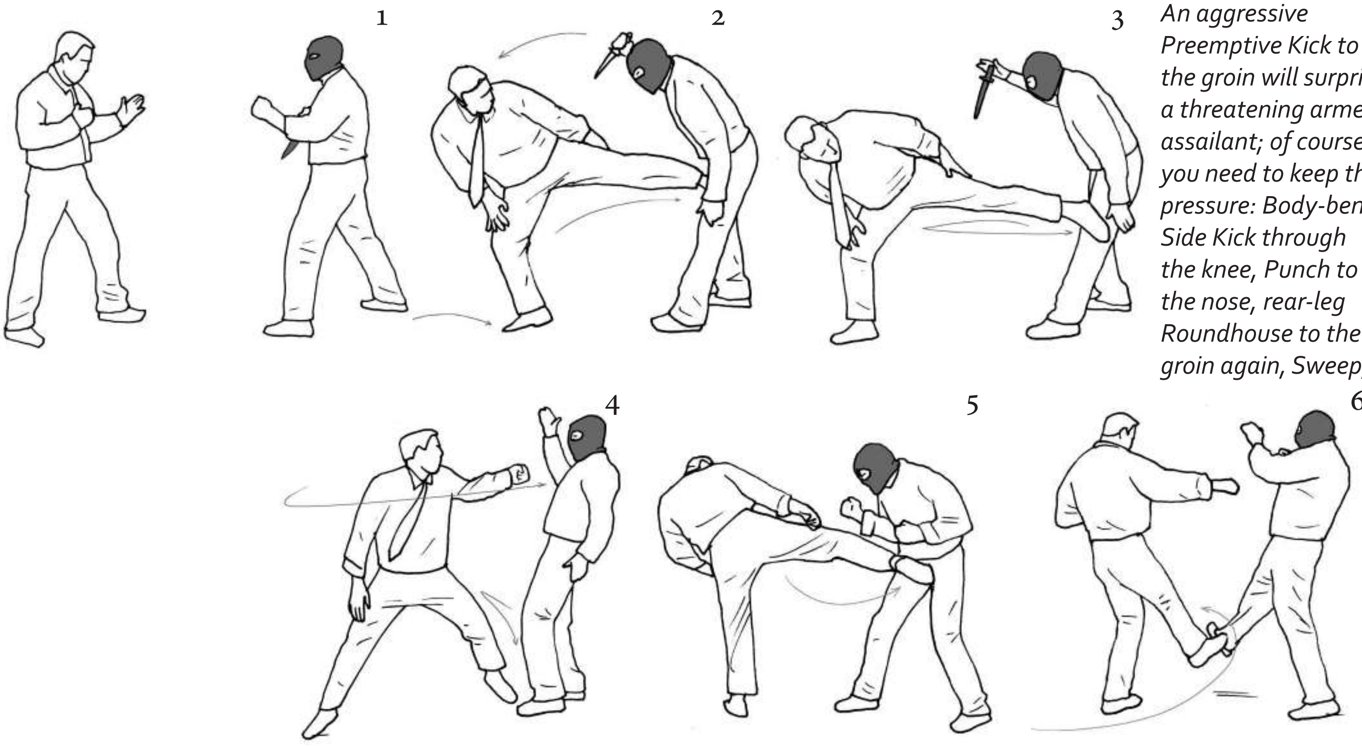
The *Krav Maga* target for this kick should be nearly exclusively the opponent's ***testicles***. The only other option would be the lower back at kidneys level, and this only with the more powerful rear-leg version. In both cases, it is imperative to kick a few inches *into* the target, then to chamber back brusquely, and finally to follow up aggressively.



The rear-leg version to the lower back; note how the bent body keeps you safe



An Offensive application of the rear-leg version to the lower back: start with a high Jab/Cross to 'open' his lower back and follow up with a Whipping Punch and an Outer Reap Takedown



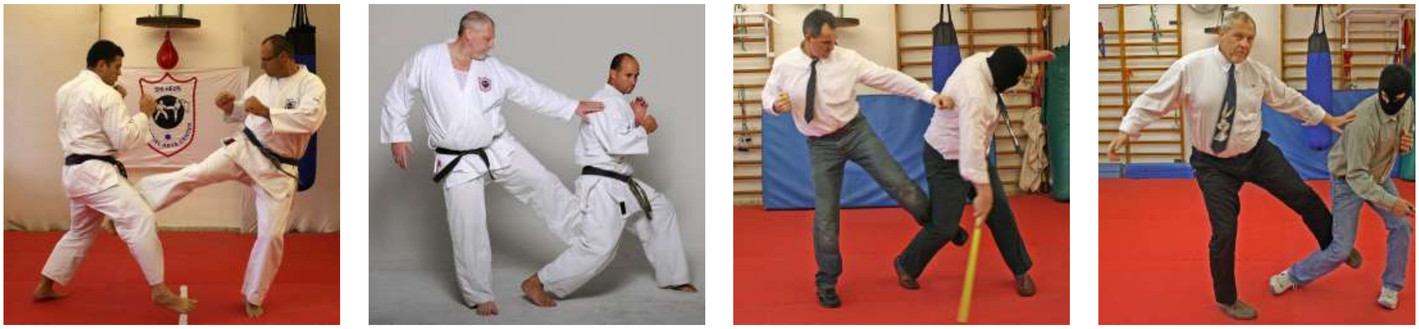
An aggressive Preemptive Kick to the groin will surprise a threatening armed assailant; of course, you need to keep the pressure: Body-bent Side Kick through the knee, Punch to the nose, rear-leg Roundhouse to the groin again, Sweep,...

All in all: A great Kick worth drilling!

4.13. The ‘Low Kick’ or Straight-leg Roundhouse

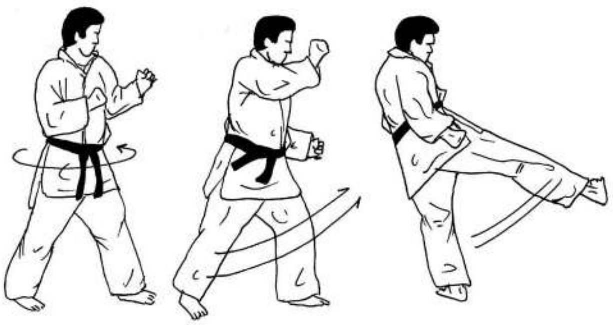
The Straight-leg Low Circular Kick is a classic of ‘hard’ Martial Arts like *Kyokushinkai Karate, Muay Thai Boxing and MMA* among others. It is so classic that it has earned the common name of ‘Low Kick’. This is a Power Kick in which you give ‘everything you have’.

Unlike the Roundhouse Kick it is not a ‘Whipping’ Kick and it does not require a chamber-back: you kick through the target all the way. The target, in *Krav Maga*, is exclusively the knee. Kicking the upper thigh, like in sporting versions, is not good enough for self-preservation: it will usually be enough to stop an amateurish assailant, but it risks not being enough for a trained adversary, a hardened criminal in high adrenalin state or an opponent on drugs. Therefore, the *Krav Maga* trainee is invited to drill attacking the knee exclusively, so as not to miss it if ever in a stressful real world situation.

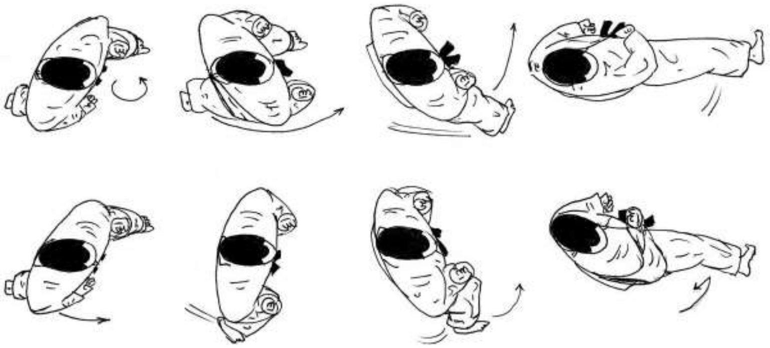


The Low Kick

The Kick requires using the hips to ‘pull’ the near-straight leg in an arc directly through the target. It is the shoulders that start to pivot, pulling in the trunk and the hips like an elastic band that will then launch the leg explosively. Once the Kick is launched, the hips start spinning in the opposite direction. You should aim to kick through the side of the opponent’s knee, inside or outside, and *start decelerating only at least a foot behind the target*. One cannot stress enough that it is a kick-through maneuver with no afterthought or hesitation. Muay Thai fighters often make a full circle after the kick, instead of slowing the momentum after impact (Muay Thai fighters also step out diagonally with the front foot to ‘open’ the hips before pulling the Kick).



The Low Kick: pivot with the hips first, then kick through!



Sky View comparison of the Low Kick (up) to the classic Roundhouse (down)

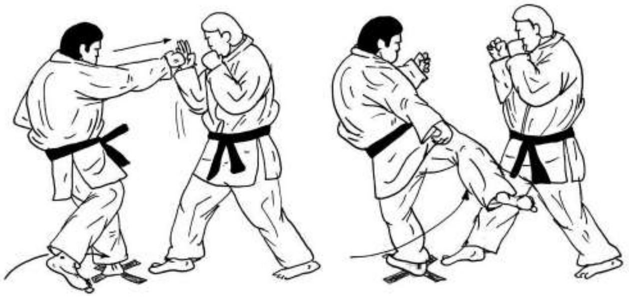
Drill the kick for power and precision; note the twist of the hips before execution

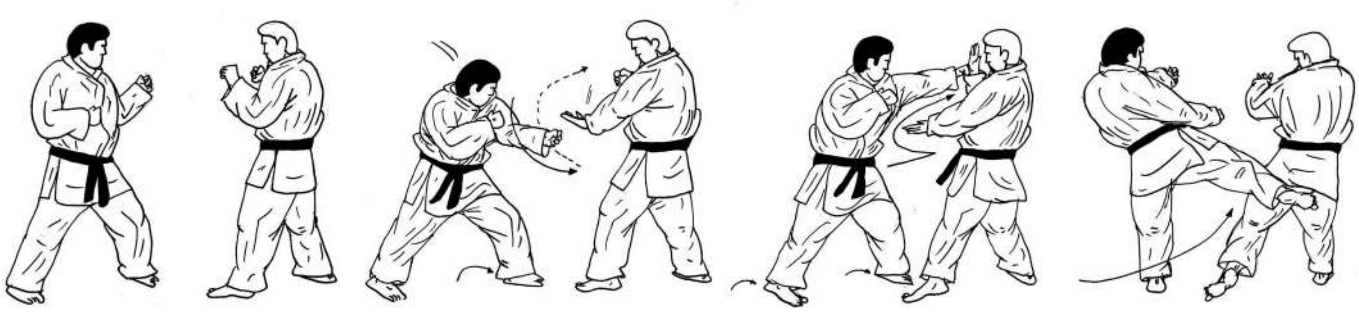
This is a very aggressive maneuver and it should be drilled as one. You should project your body and mind forward with the idea of crushing your opponent with everything you have. It can be used as an *All-purpose Stop Kick* if you have the required mental attitude: Wait to 'feel' the very beginning of your opponent's attack and jump forward with an all-powerful 'Low Kick' at knee's height. Your attacker expects you to retreat or stay in place to block; instead you are disturbing his range expectations, jamming his attack and kicking through his moving legs with everything you have got. Ouch! Follow up!

This Kick requires serious ***power training on the heavy bag***. After lots of drilling, you will have in your arsenal a Kick that can single-handedly win a fight. Really: One Kick to the knee; end of fight.

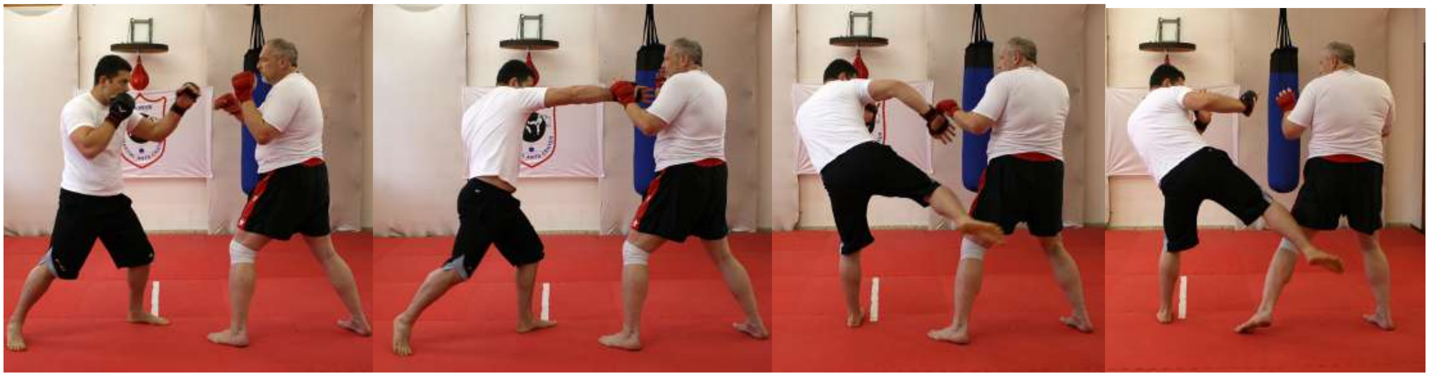
Various applications are presented below, but it is truly a versatile All-purpose Kick, always suitable.

Feint and step slightly out (Muay Thai-style) to kick through the inside knee

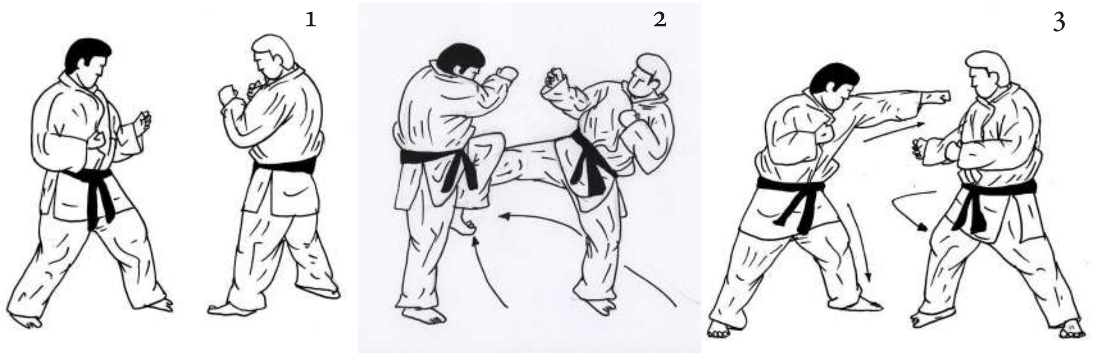




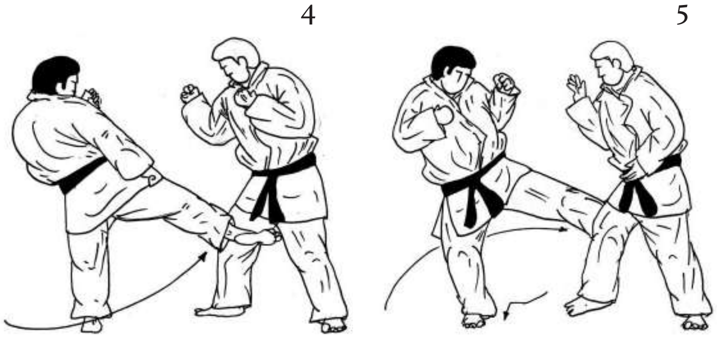
Setting up a Low Kick to the outside knee with a low to high Progressive Indirect Punching Attack (PIA)



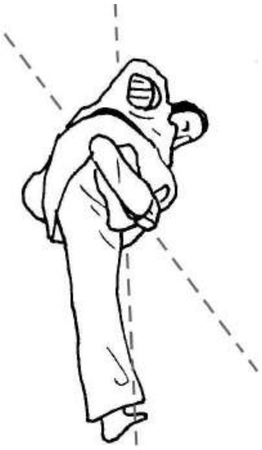
The simplest Low Kick set-up: High Jab/Cross to Low Kick



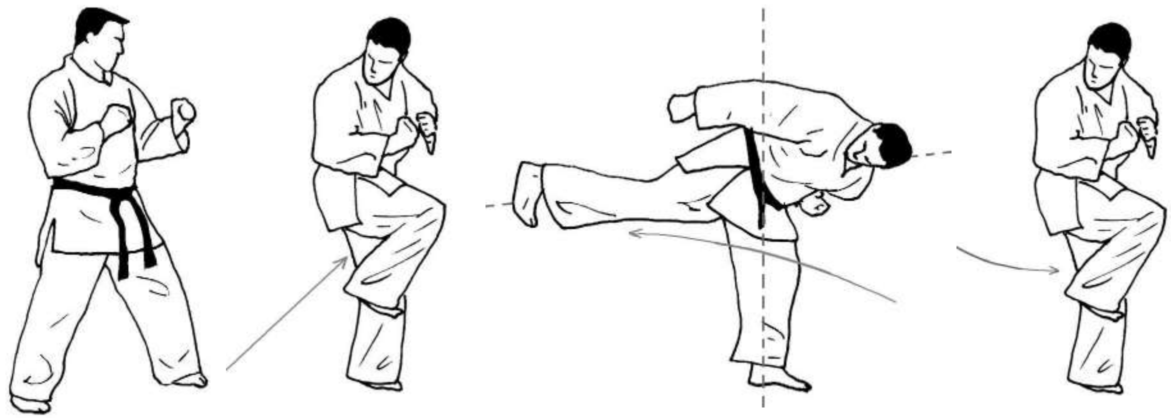
Aggressive Counter after a Leg Block: Double Low Kick to the same knee, inside and outside



4.14. The Penetrating Back Kick



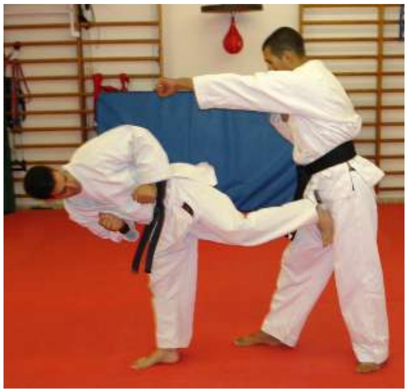
The Penetrating Back Kick is even more powerful than the Side Kick, because it adds the power of the glutes to that of the lower back, but it has the disadvantage to be, at least partially, executed while presenting your back to the opponent. But it can be a great Kick in a dynamic situation. Just imagine you have missed with a 'Low Kick' and your momentum has taken you too far: instead of coming back to face him, use a Powerful Back Kick.
The *Krav Maga Back Kick* does not require the full chamber of traditional Martial Arts: the Kick is so powerful that it can do with a minimal chambering. The important point will be to kick with the hips and to bend forward (45 degrees) for maximum power at impact. Chambering back remains important though.



The classic Penetrating Back Kick with full chamber

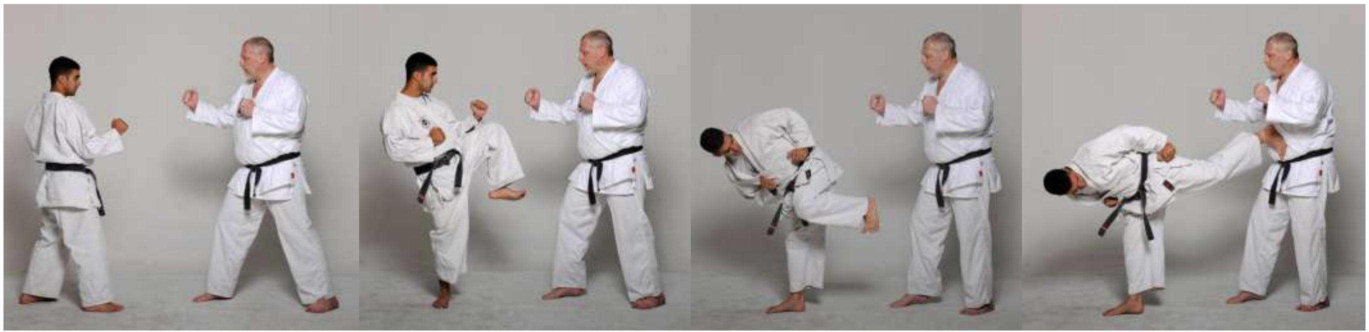
A powerful Kick indeed!

The Back Kick is difficult to use with absolute precision; that is why it usually targets the center of the body. The good news is that it is so powerful that it will do damage anywhere it connects. Aim for the *lower abdomen, the hips, the ribs and even the solar plexus*. If you are very proficient and can be more precise, then you should aim for the ***groin*** area, and even the ***knee***.

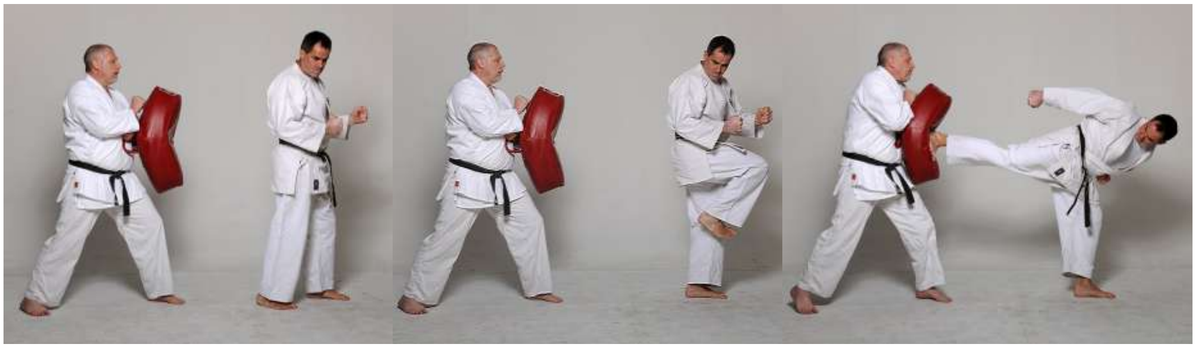


Aiming for the general groin area is a good policy

The Kick is obviously to be used to strike an opponent who is behind you, whether he is attacking you from behind or whether you have presented your back (by accident or purposely). In Krav Maga, you can also ***spin forward*** to get into position for a powerful Back Kick.

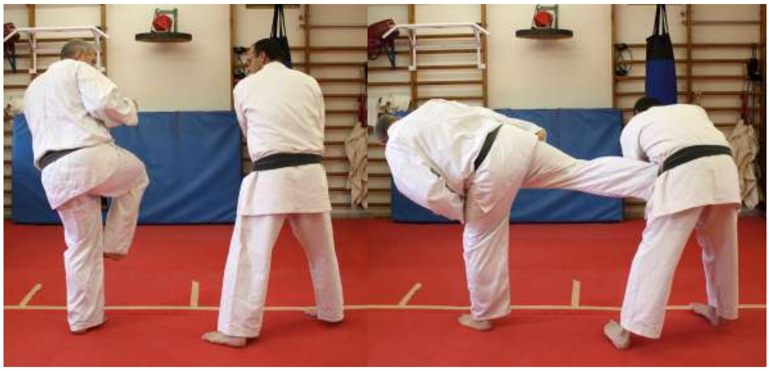


The classic Spin-forward Back Kick

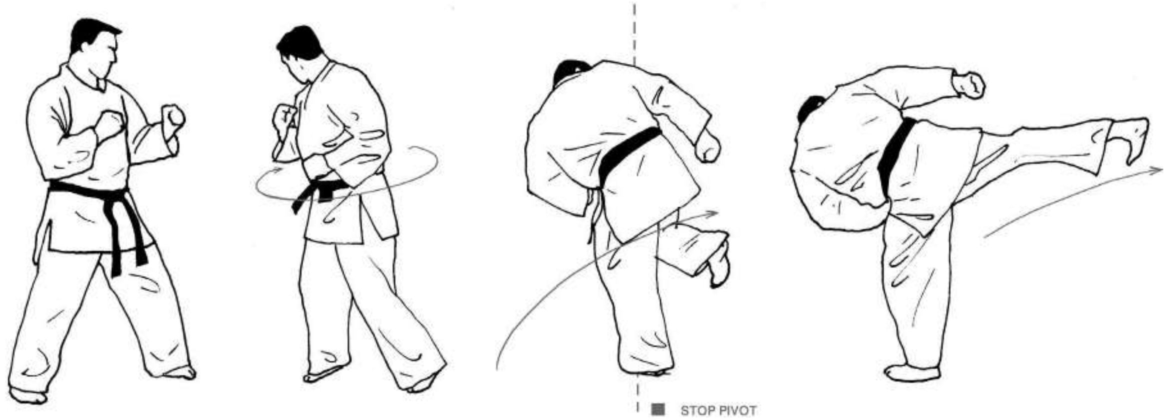


The classic Back Kick against an assailant from behind you

The Spin-forward Back Kick allows you to attack the groin of an opponent in a well-guarded side stance

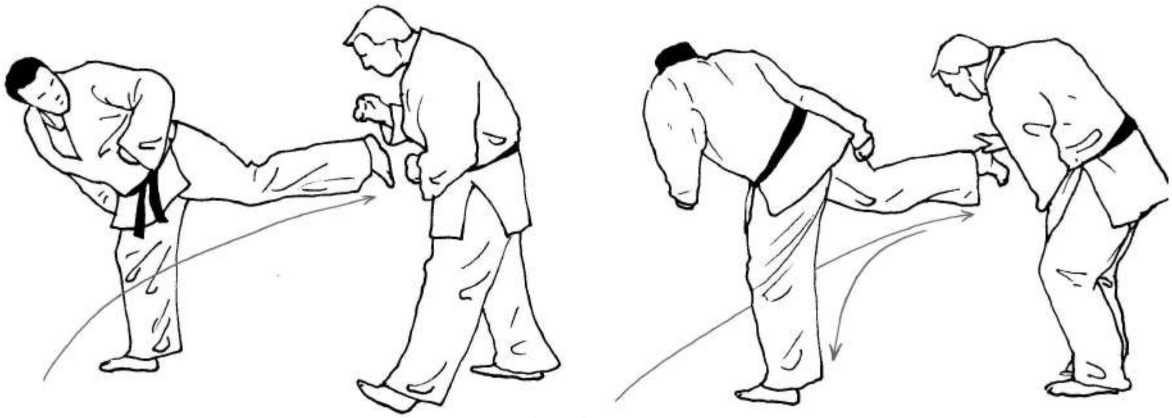


The Spinning-back Back Kick is ***not*** recommended for basic *Krav Maga* training: it is oversophisticated for stressed real-life use and it requires lots of training to avoid the diagonal trajectory caused by the mix of a circular spin-back and a straight kick. *Unless very proficient*, forget about it.
On the other hand, if you have spinned (back or forward), by accident, momentum or on purpose, and then have stopped, you could be in good position for a Back Kick. This would not be a Spin-back Back Kick *per se*, but a regular Back Kick after a completed pivot.



The classic Spin-back Back Kick: not recommended for the Kravist

The Back Kick is a powerful and very versatile Kick that can be and should be used any time you have your back partly or fully towards the opponent.
And the best follow-up to a Back Kick is nearly always ... another Back Kick!

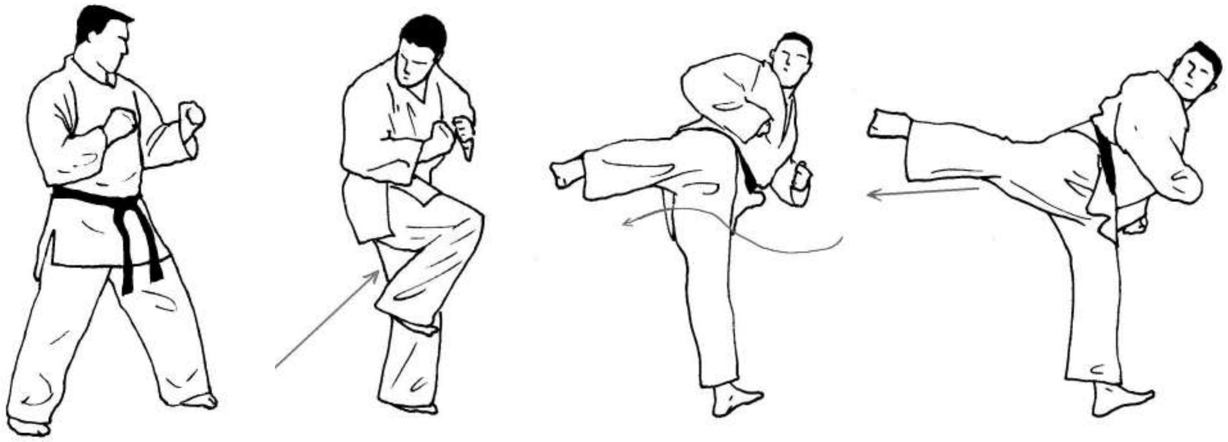


Two Back Kicks in series

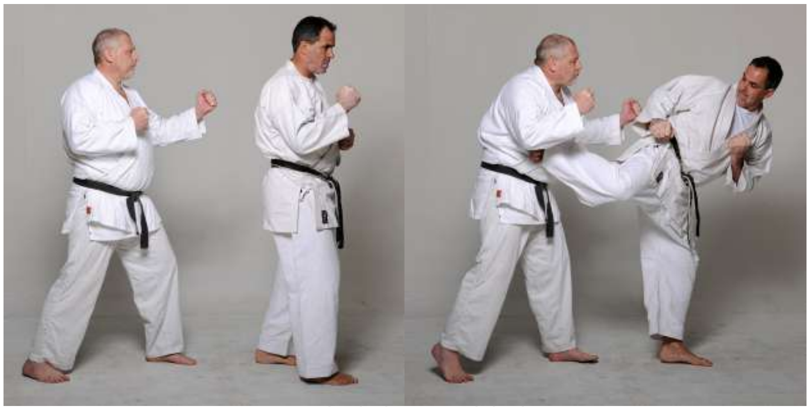
4.15. THE SHORT BACK KICK

The importance of Back Kicks is that they can be executed against an assailant behind you, whether he attacks you from behind or whether the fight places you in such a relative situation. The Penetrating Back Kick above is very useful and powerful if you find yourself in such a situation. But it does not work if your adversary is too close behind you.

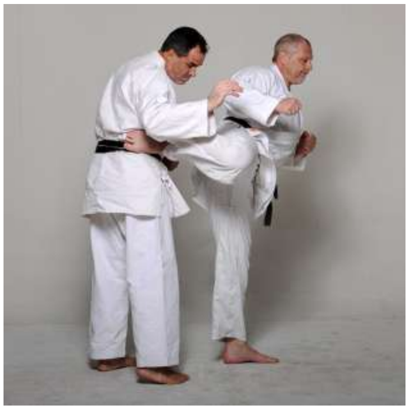
If such is the case, you have to change the trajectory of the Kick: instead of going straight behind you, it arches outwards as much as necessary to allow for a power-gathering vector. The execution requires some flexibility, and certainly requires serious drilling on the heavy bag. It is important tough, because you never know when you can find yourself in such a situation. Only drilling will make you familiar with the Kick and will allow you to pack it with necessary power.



The classic Short Back kick

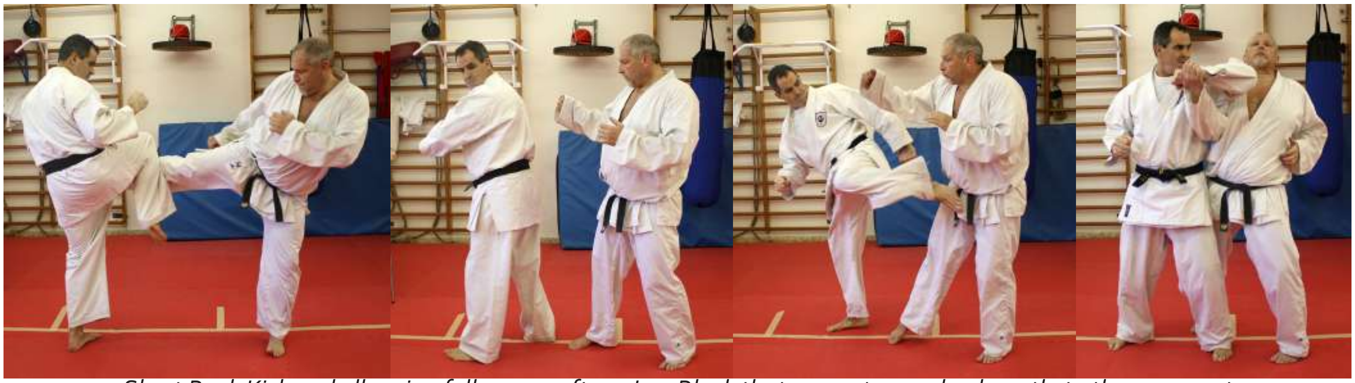


Applied Short Back kick

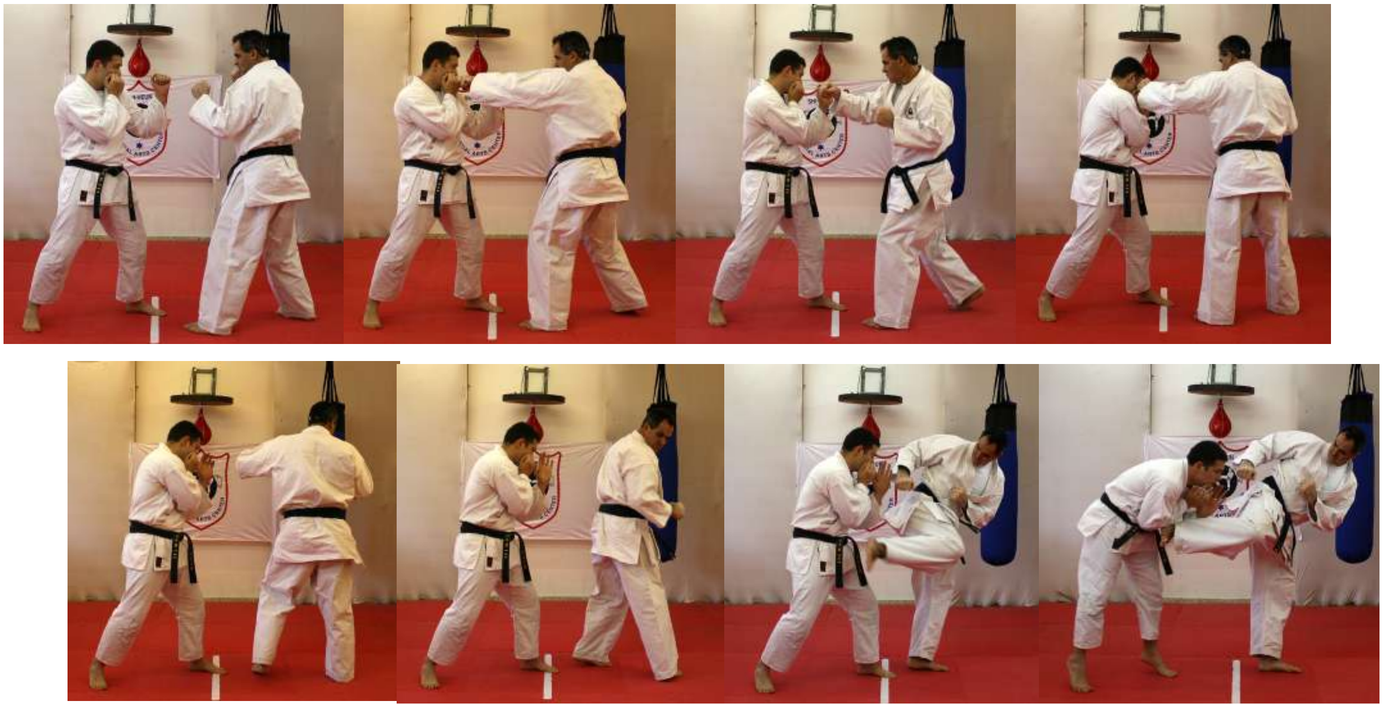


The Ultra-short Back kick from very close up

The Krav Maga targets of this Kick are essentially the *groin, the lower abdomen and the lower ribs.* Most of what has been said for the regular Penetrating Back Kick stays valid for this short version.



Short Back Kick and elbowing follow-up, after a Leg Block that presents your back partly to the opponent



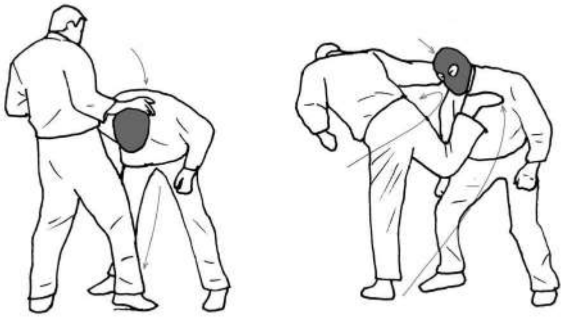
Offensive Combination with a Spin-back Short Back kick, by an expert

4.16. THE UPWARD BACK KICKS

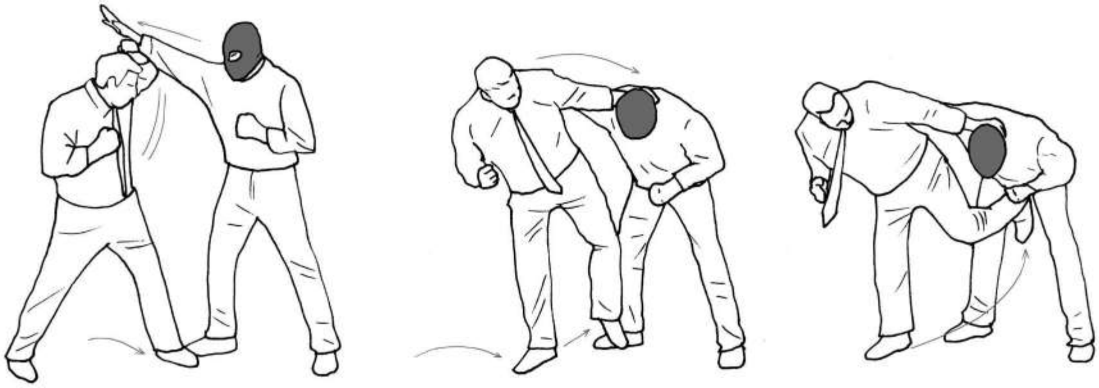
Uppercut Back kick, Upward Hook Back Kick and Ghost Back Kick

The other and preferred option if your attacker is behind you and is close, is to use a Back Kick with an *Upward trajectory* that targets… the testicles. These Kicks could also target the face of a bent-over opponent, but not really in *Krav Maga* where numerous more serious options are available.

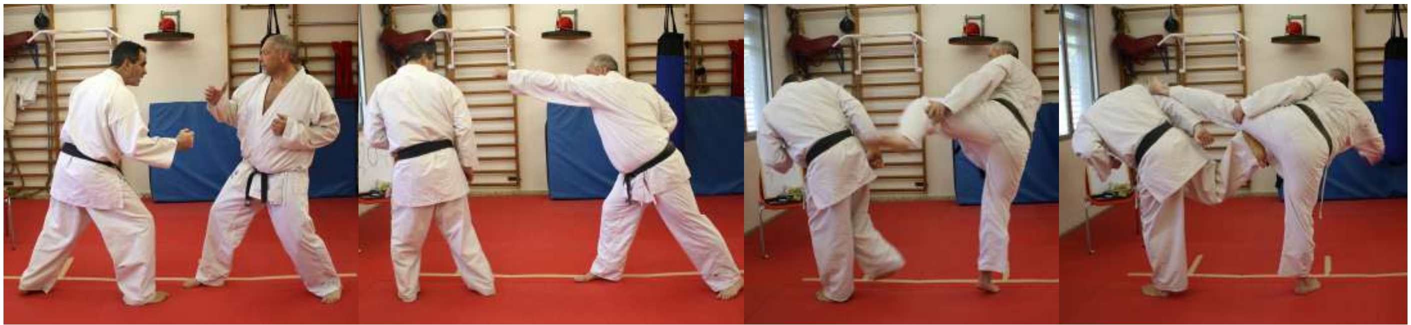
The Uppercut Back Kick simply travels straight up into the groin with the bottom of the foot up. It is imperative to kick up a few inches *into* the target *with the idea of lifting the opponent up*. Then follow up.



Uppercut Back Kick to the face, not really a classic Krav Maga move

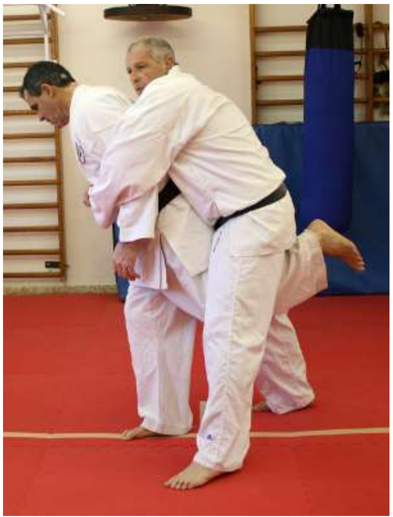


Applied Uppercut Back Kick after a high block

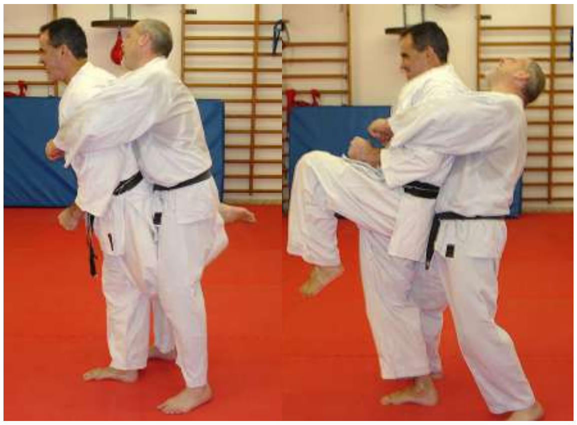


Feint to provoke a counter and Uppercut-kick the groin of the kicking opponent

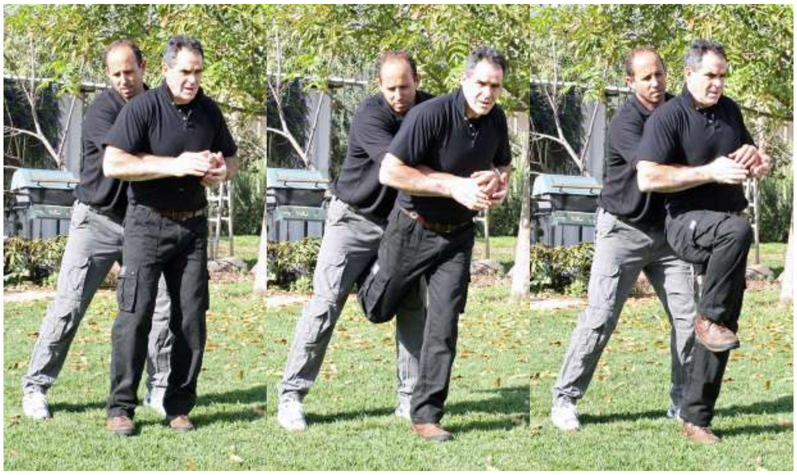
The Upward Hook Back Kick is more devastating, but it requires that the legs of the opponent be at least slightly open. The idea is to kick with the heel behind the testicles, and then 'hook' into them by pulling the foot back forward; all the while you are kicking a few inches up into the target. This hits the area hard (heel) and then pulls the testicles violently forward. It is a very easy technique to master and a very debilitating move, but it requires to be close to the opponent, as you have to kick between his legs, behind his crotch. It should be noted that the technique can also be executed from behind the opponent.



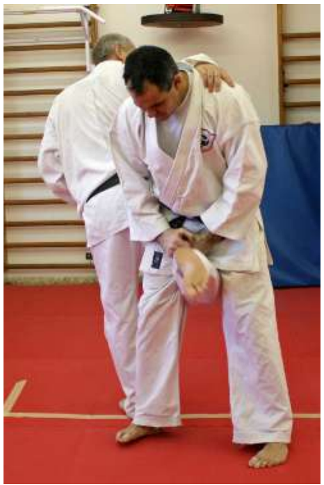
The classic 'hooking' Back Kick to the testicles



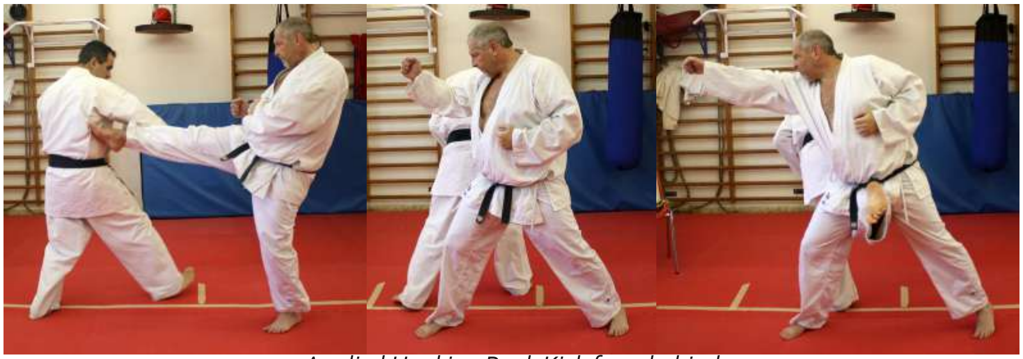
The trajectory and effect of the Kick



Another view of the Hooking Back groin Kick

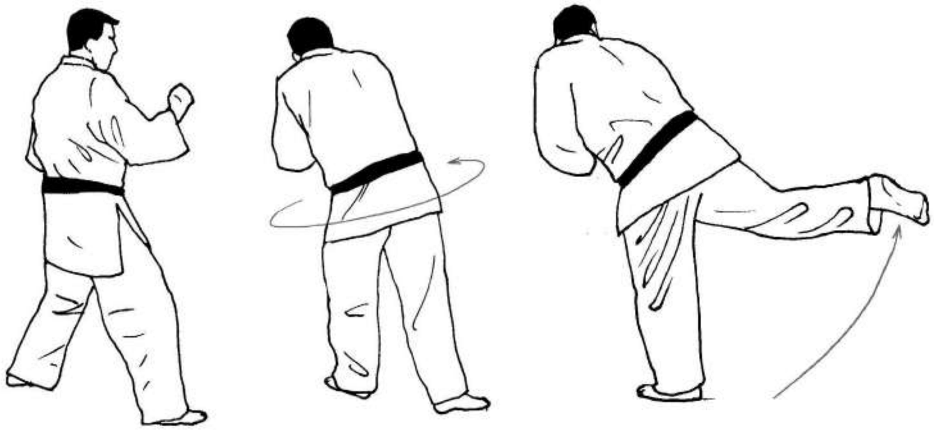


The Hooking Back Kick executed from behind the opponent

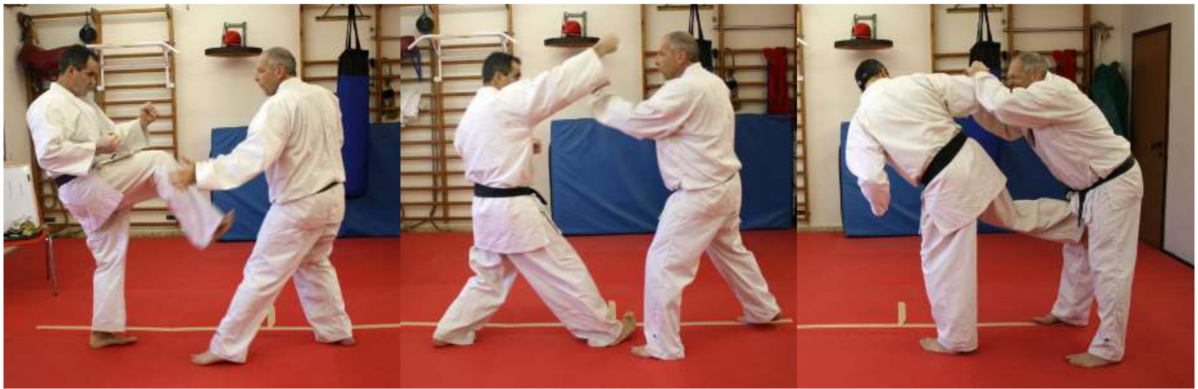


Applied Hooking Back Kick from behind

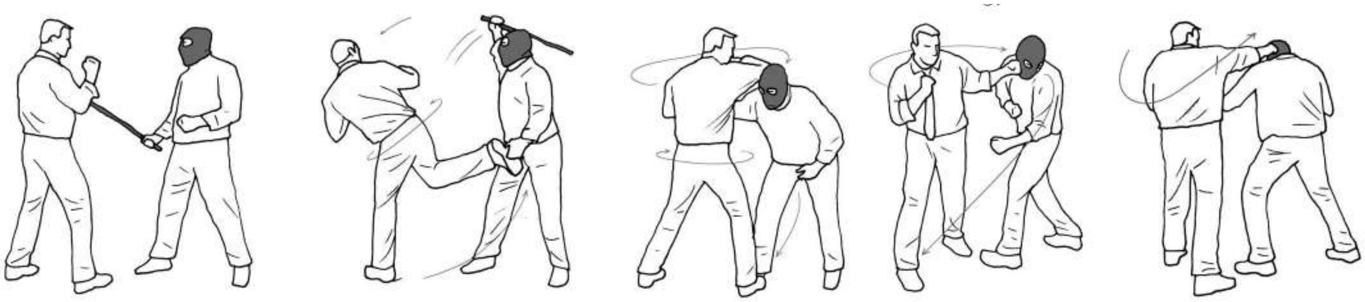
__The Ghost Back Kick__ is more a 'trick' than a full-fledged technique. It is surprisingly effective though, because it is stealthy and it makes use of the bully psychology of most attackers. In this maneuver, you turn your back to your assailant as if cowering and getting ready to flee. While it emboldens him and neutralizes caution, your (formerly) front foot simply goes up into his approaching groin. Surprise! And then you follow up, immediately and reinstate your **aggressive** 'no-victim' posture.



The Ghost Back Kick, simple but effective



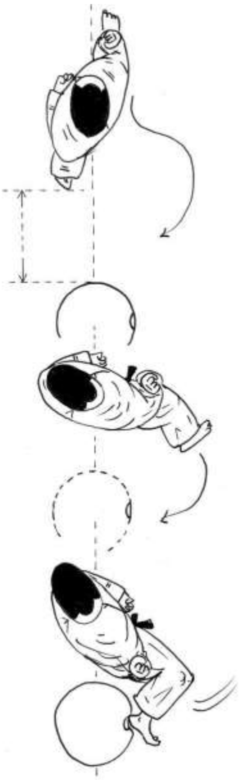
Applied Ghost Back Kick after an offensive opening



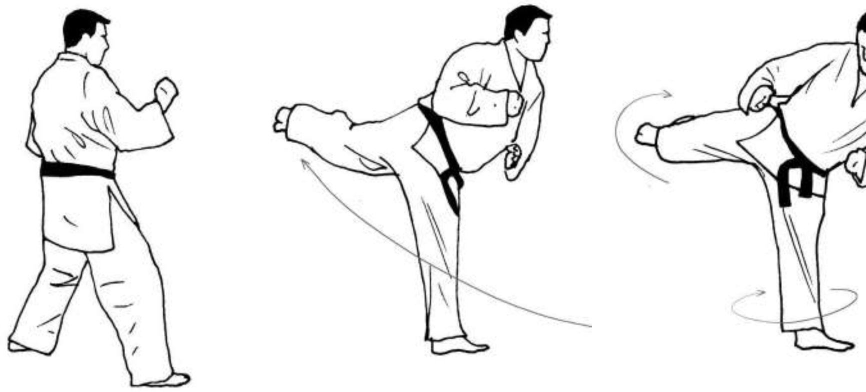
Feint cowering from a stick strike, ghost-back-kick and…Retzev

4.17. THE SMALL HEEL BACK HOOK KICK

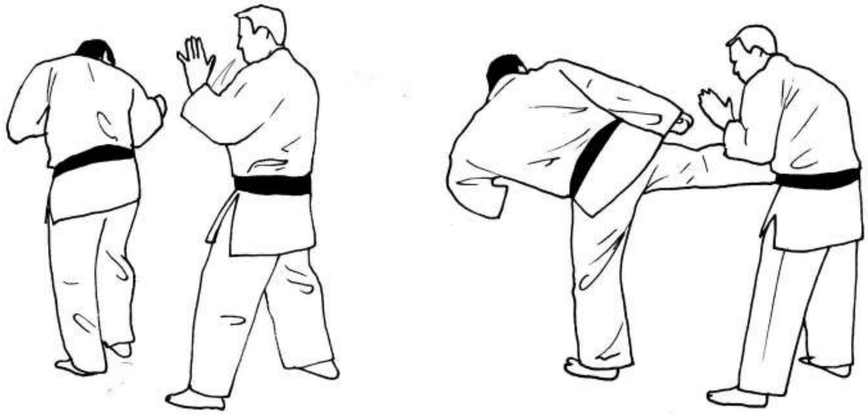
If your opponent is behind you, but stands sideways, you will not have access to his groin with straight or upward Back Kicks. ***The Small Heel Back Hook Kick*** is the solution. This is a very fast, relatively easy, generally unexpected and deceivingly powerful Kick that has the added advantage of allowing some 'hooking' into the groin. It is a hybrid between a Hook Kick and a Back Kick that should be drilled by every fighter. It should be drilled on the marked (*at groin level*) heavy bag for power and penetration: touch the bag behind you for distance and kick with minimal upper body movement. Try to kick without looking, or looking only just before impact: it should be an explosive Stealth Kick.



Sky View of the Kick

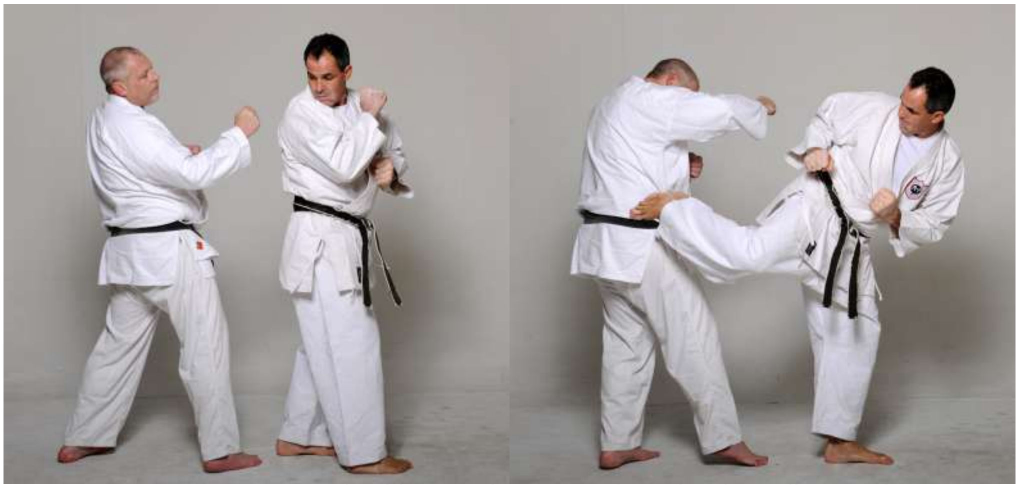


The Small Heel Back Hook Kick

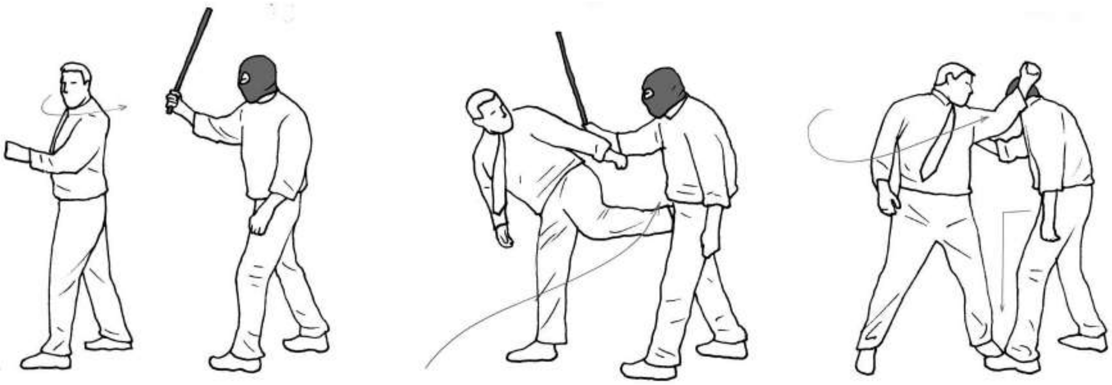


The applied Kick

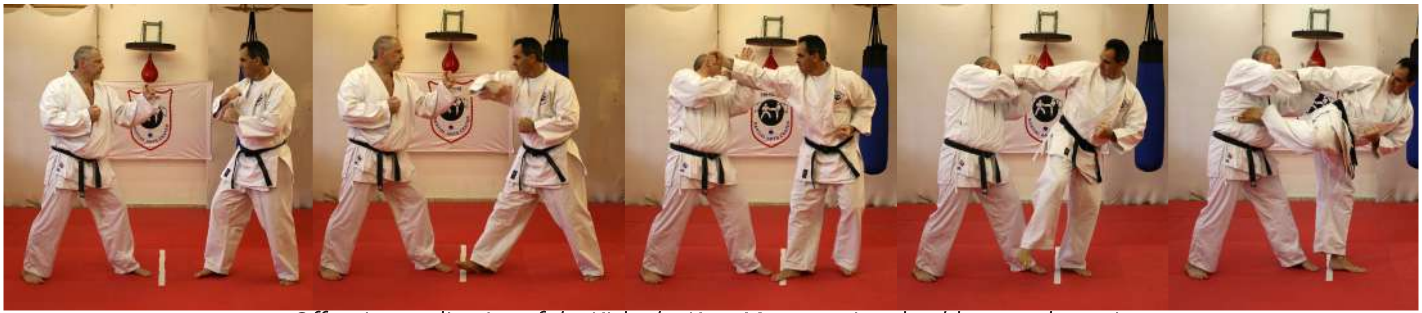
The Photos and Drawings show hitting the opponent's ribs, but, in *Krav Mag*a, the Kick should only target the ***groin*** area. Kick into the target and 'hook in' with your heel.



In Krav Maga, one should target the groin and not the ribs as illustrated



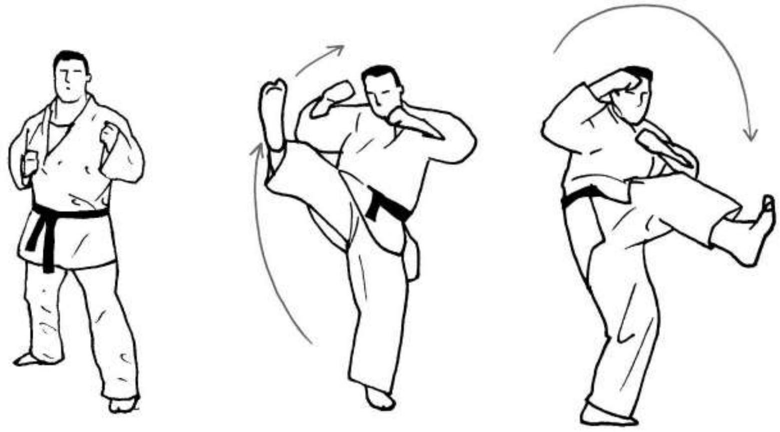
pplied Small Heel Back Hook Kick against threatening attacker from behind; always follow up



Offensive application of the Kick; the Krav Maga version should target the groin

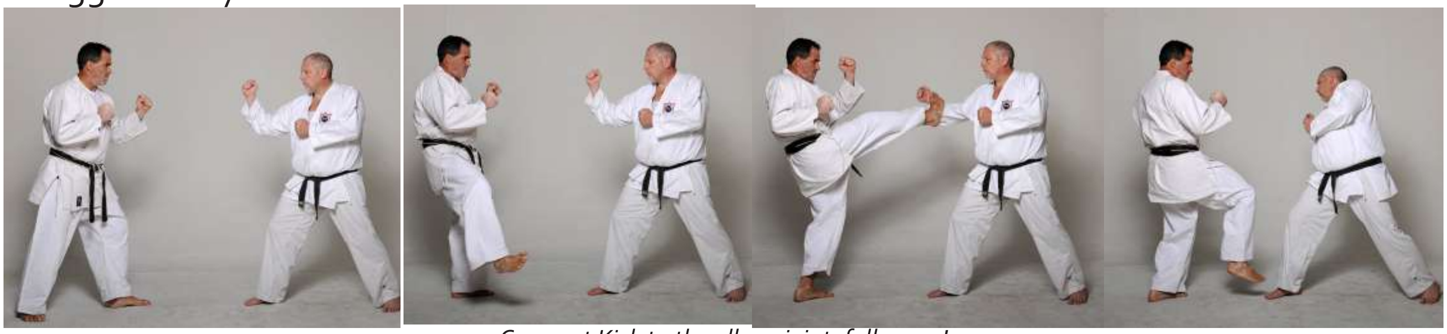
4.18. THE CRESCENT KICK

The Crescent Kick is not very versatile. In *Krav Maga*, it would not be used for anything else than hitting the elbow of the opponent's arm. It is a very powerful Kick, but it requires gathering power along its trajectory and is not very practical for the below-the-belt sensitive-target parameters of Krav Maga. It could be used to powerfully kick through the head of a bent-over opponent, or to kick the groin area of an adversary in perfect relative side position; but those are not especially common situations.

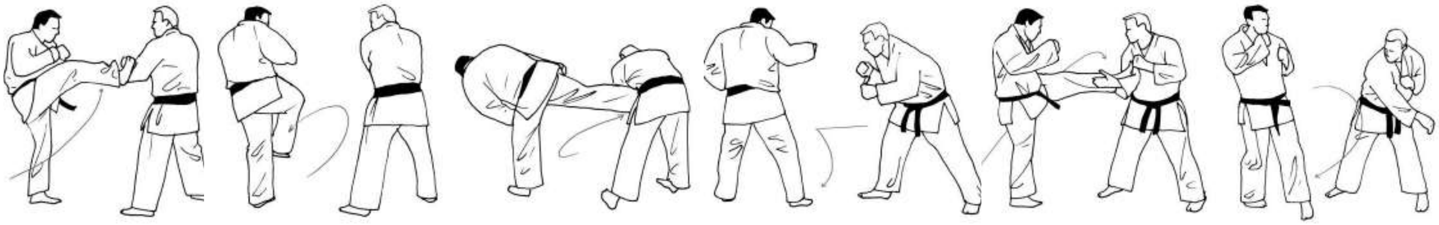


The (Inside) Crescent Kick

The trainee is just invited to drill the Kick as a kick-through powerful attack of the lead limb of the opponent. Being a very good fitness drill as well, it can only do good.
Aim for the *elbow* as precisely as possible and use the effect at impact to follow-up aggressively.



Crescent Kick to the elbow joint; follow up!

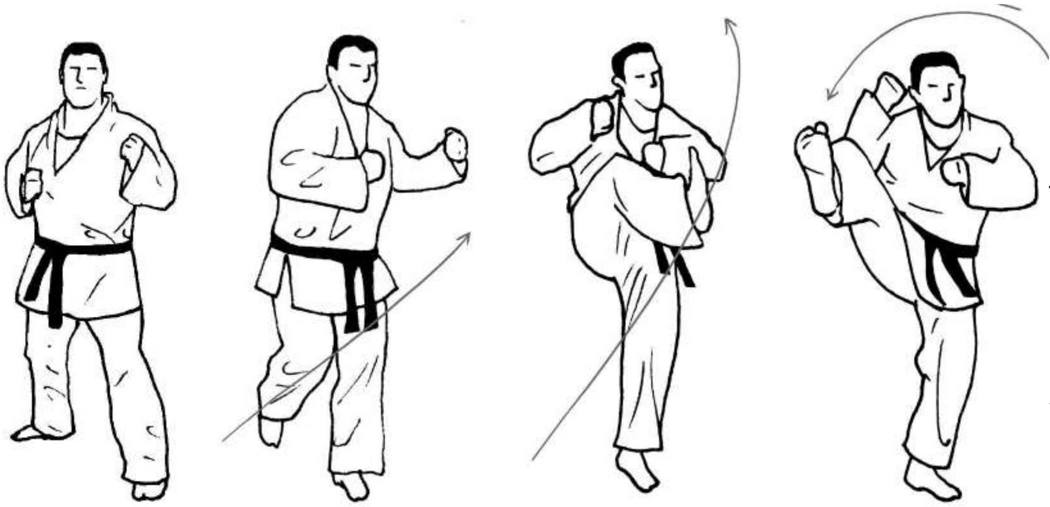


Two Crescent Kicks to the opponent's elbows in an aggressive combination: elbow joints destruction tactic

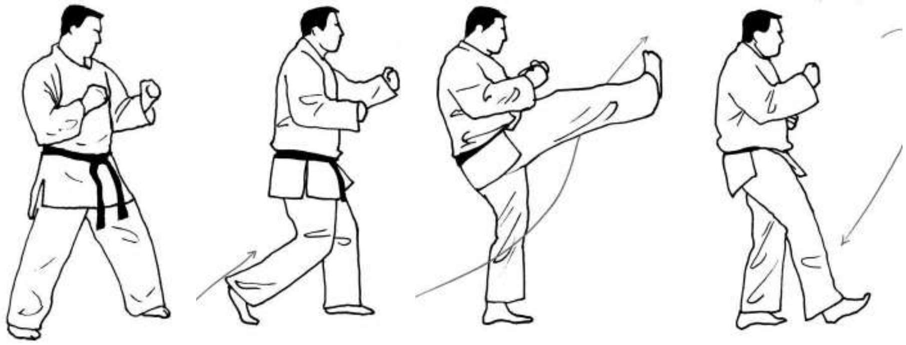
This Kick is not to be used in its Hollywood version: crescent-kicking the knife-armed (or even gun-armed) wrist of an assailant is tantamount to suicide! Remember that!

4.19. The Outside Crescent kick

Everything said about the Crescent Kick is valid for ***the Outside Crescent Kick***, including and especially the Hollywood warning part. The only difference between the kicks is the opposite trajectory.

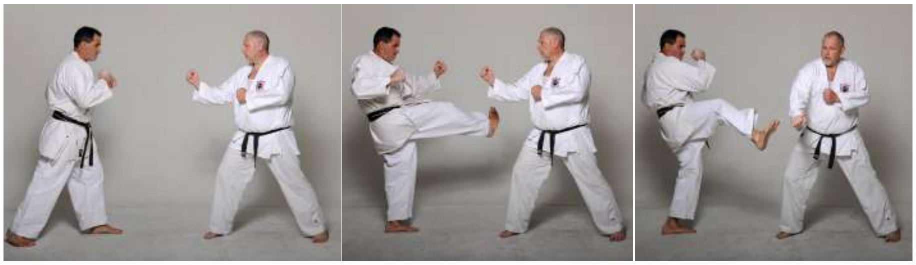


Front view of the Outside Crescent Kick

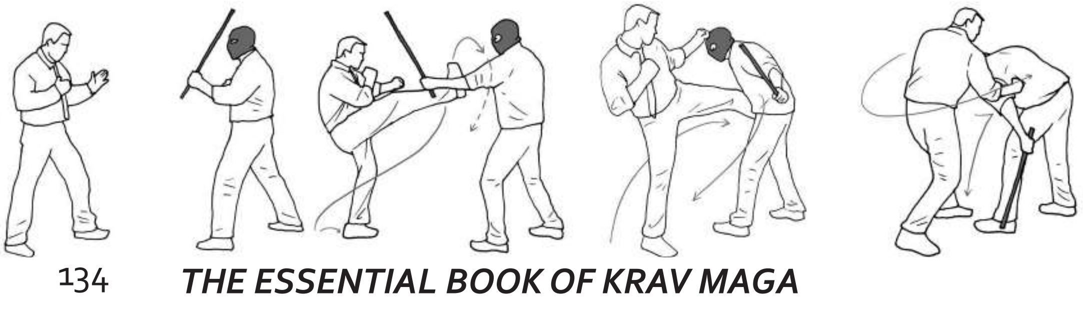


Side view of the Outside Crescent kick

Crescent Kicks are great and useful all-purpose Martial Arts Kicks, but they are not in line with *Krav Maga* principles. They can just be used for blocking attacking limbs and for elbow destruction.



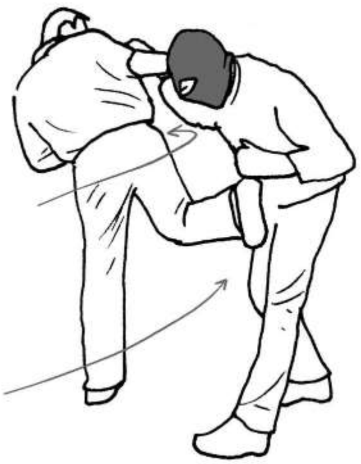
Outside Crescent Kick to the opponent's elbow joint



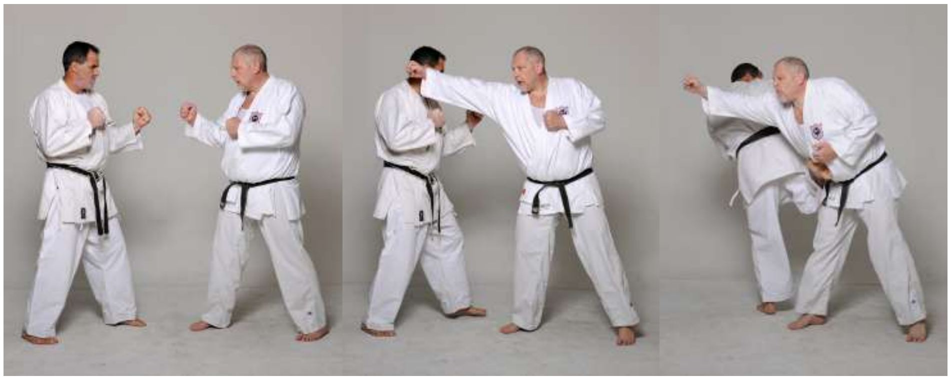
Attack the stick-brandishing elbow and follow up

4.20. THE OUTWARD GHOST GROIN KICK

This is a fantastic little Kick, easy to perform and extremely effective. It should be a nearly automatic Kick if you find yourself close to the opponent, especially if you are interested in kicking and then keep moving away from the situation.

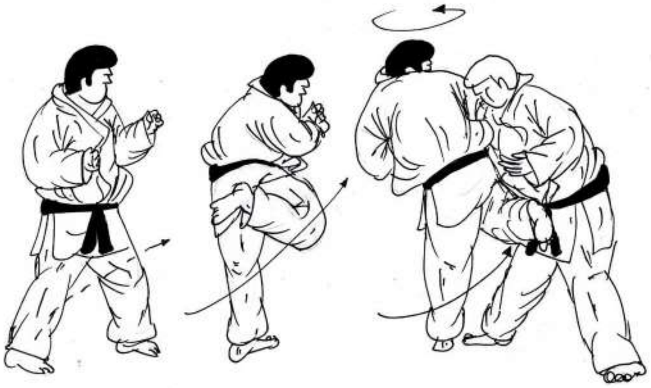


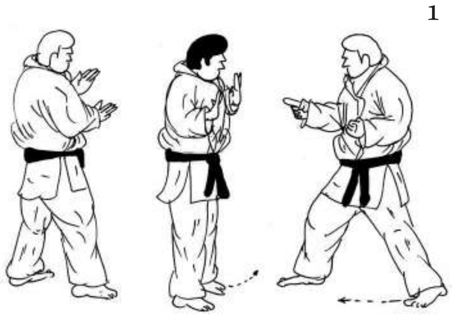
The Outward Ghost Groin kick



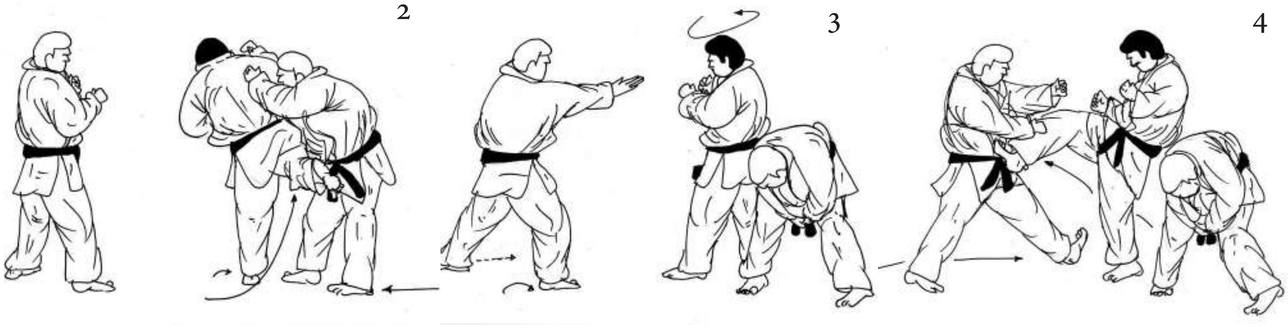
The Applied Outward Ghost Groin Kick

The classic execution of the kick





A great offensive technique to move away from an opponent, for example in the case of multiple attackers



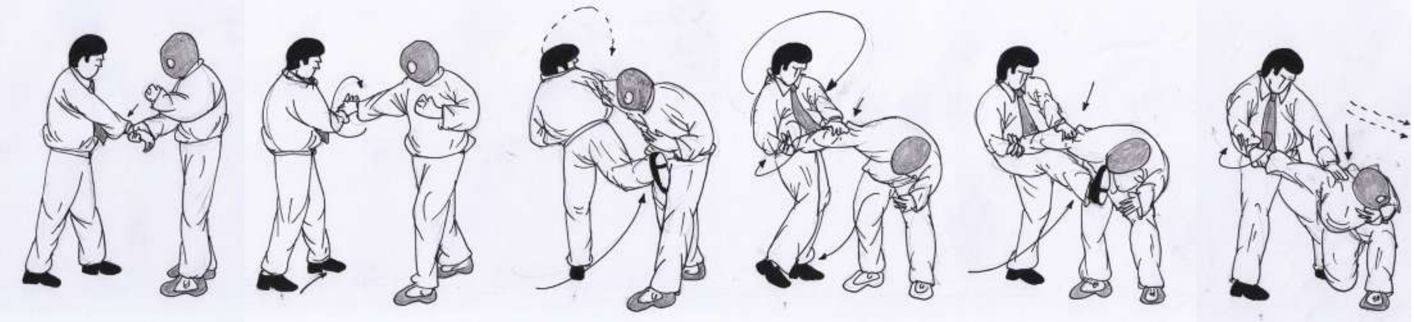
In *Krav Maga*, the Kick will be essentially directed at the *groin* (Other Martial Arts also target the solar plexus, the inside knee and the head of a bent-over opponent). What makes it formidable is that it does not need to be precise, but just powerful and in the general area. The reverberation of the shock wave in the general genital area will do the work. *But it also means that this Kick should be seriously drilled for power on focus pads and on the hanging bag*.

The Kick is easy to execute and understand, but more difficult to explain in words. The reader is invited to refer to the Photos and Drawings. The key points for success with this technique are:

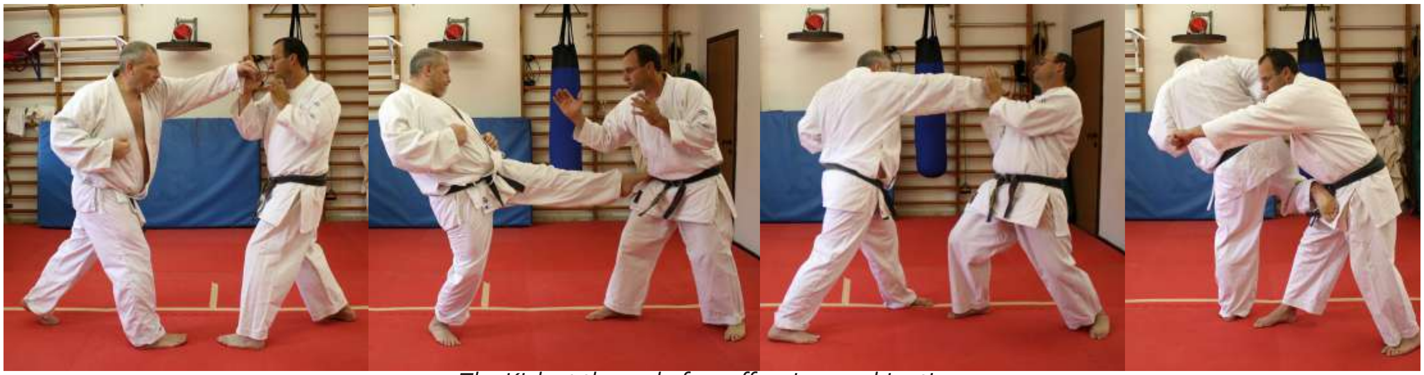
- *commitment* (no hesitation),
- keeping the upper body as disconnected as possible for as long as possible to *avoid telegraphing* the move,
- the execution of the kick *with the hips and the whole body*,
- and kicking *through* the opponent, all the way.

You can then either follow-up or keep going away from your withering opponent, according to the situation.

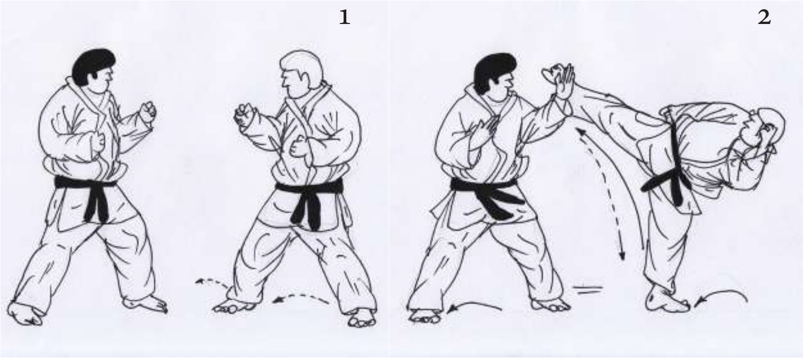
A few self-explanatory applications follow. Just remember to drill the Kick for power and for a stealthy execution. The fact that it looks simple does not mean you can scrounge on the training.



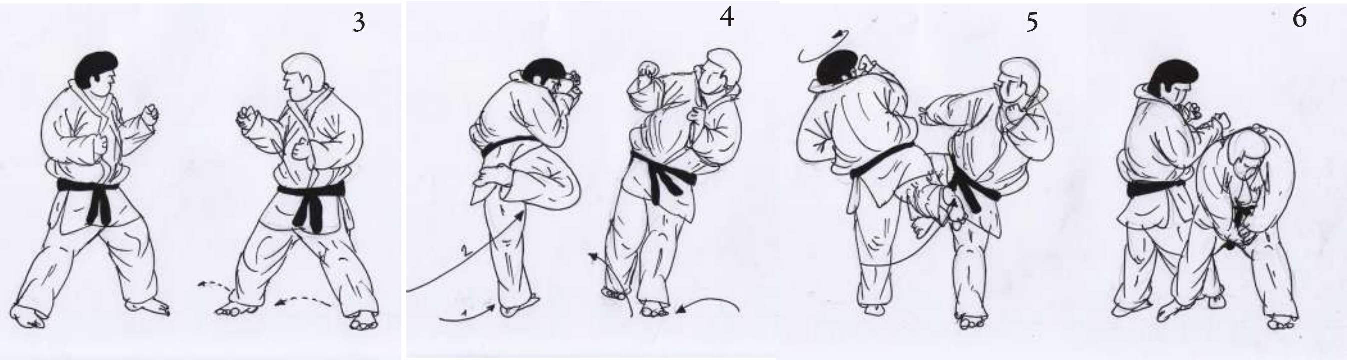
The Kick in a wrist grab self-defense move with follow-up

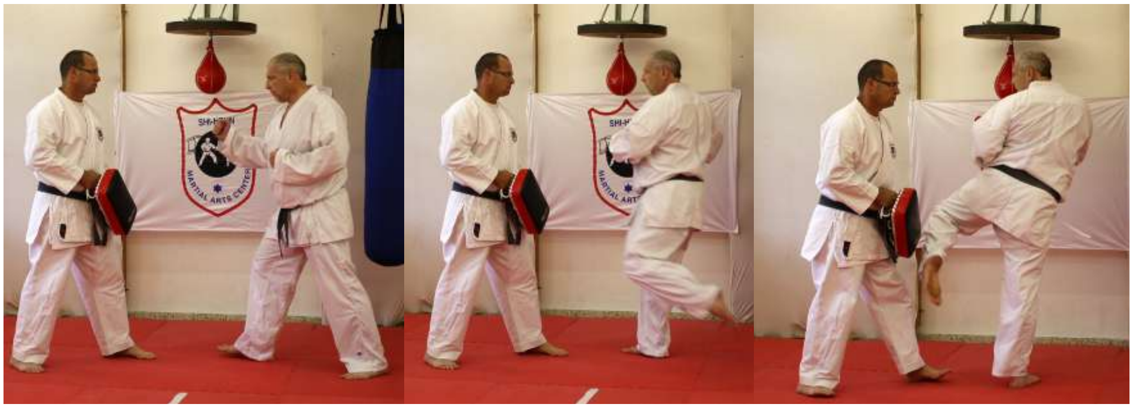


The Kick at the end of an offensive combination



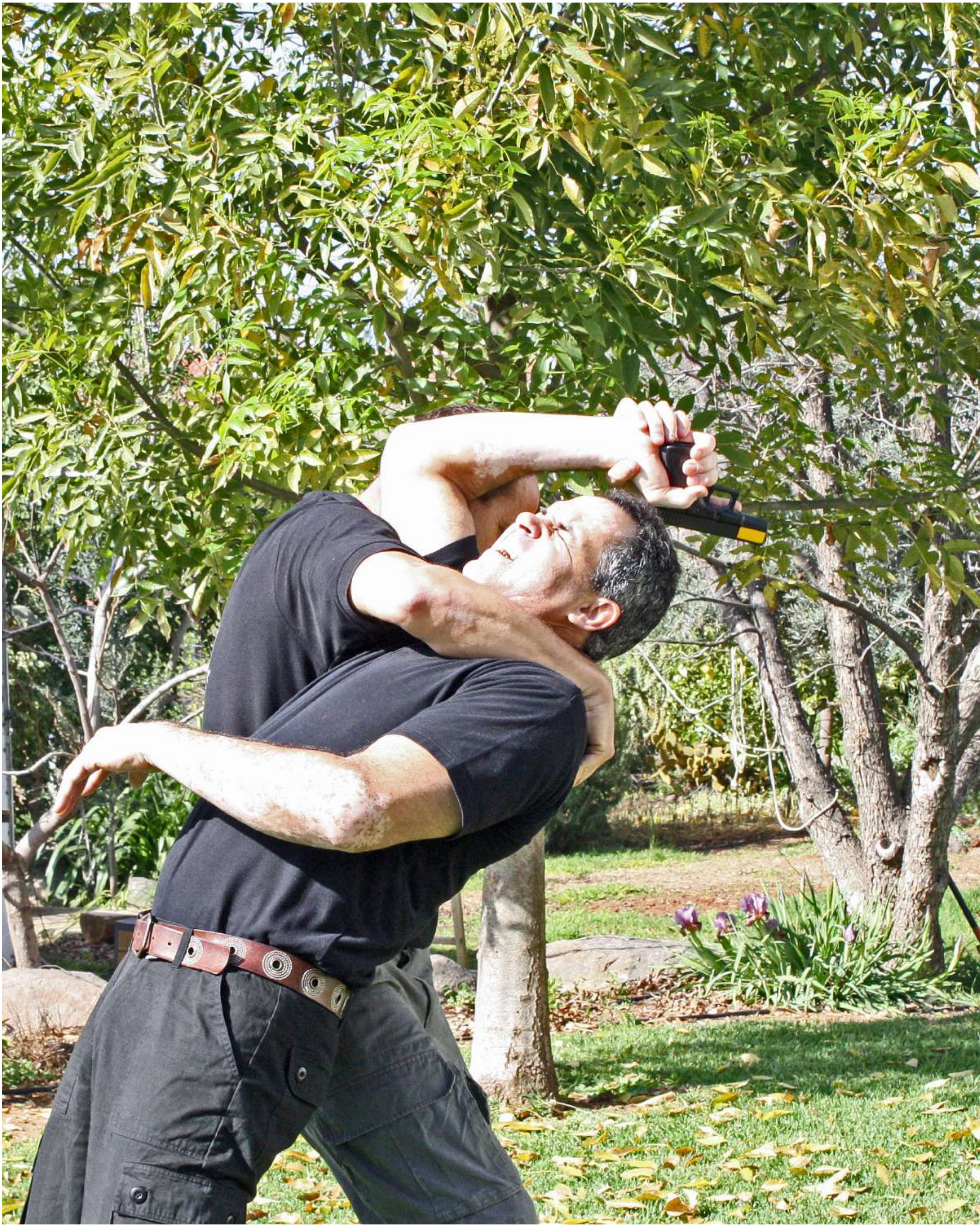
The Outward Ghost Groin kick is also a great Stop Kick: just kick go towards the attack and kick through with everything you have. Here illustrated against a front-leg kicking opponent!





This Kick requires serious drilling in order to become a true 'doomsday' weapon; here training on the focus pad

Drilling for power and penetration on the heavy bag



PART Five

Applied Krav Maga Series

טכניקות קרב מגע להגנה עצמית

5.1. General

Here follow no-nonsense applications of *Krav Maga* for self-defense that include the Kicks and Strikes we have briefly presented. This will be what in Yiddish-derived Hebrew slang is called “**Tachles**” (טאכלעס): straight to the point, no circumlocutions, no unnecessary flowery additions,…
Kicks will be part of the combinations, but only where needed. A *Krav Maga* practitioner does not kick just because he can; he kicks only if it is the most appropriate thing to do. So they can appear at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the series. Or not at all…

Please do remember that *Krav Maga* is about survival in real world violence. The techniques presented are potentially debilitating or even lethal. They are to be drilled carefully and used only if there is no alternative. These techniques are not to be taught to children or teen-agers; only when sufficient maturity is reached can one really understand the consequences of one’s actions.

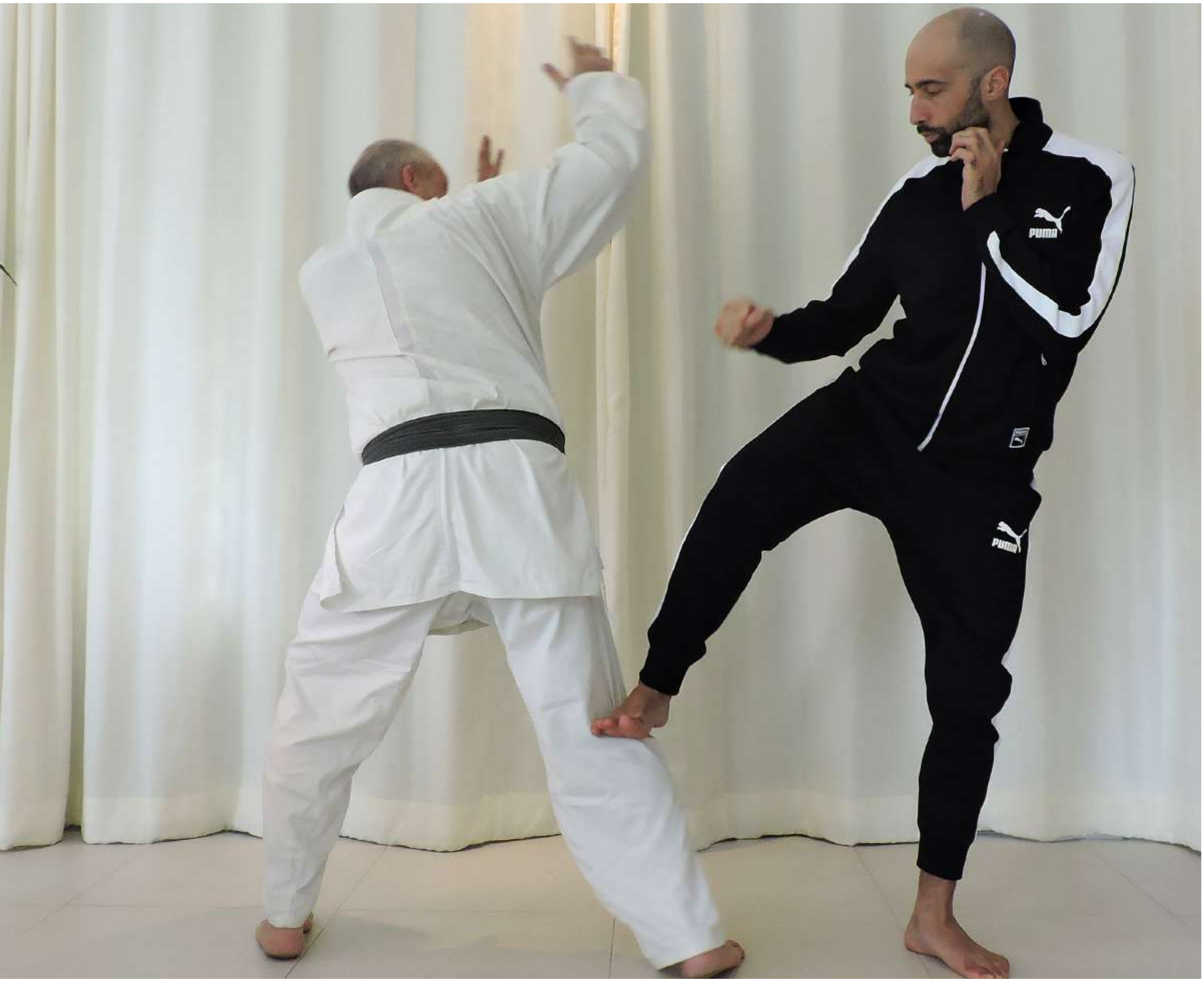
The reader should practice the applied examples as they are. After serious drilling, the reader is invited to practice them with a partner that will resist a little. A technique is very easy on a cooperating partner ‘just standing there’. Your partner should gradually ‘resist’ more in order to make your life more difficult, but also make your training more realistic. At this stage, your drills are just one notch below free-fighting. And then you’ll see that sometimes your body takes over and that you unconsciously change the combination drilled to adapt it to your morphology and affinities. This is good and certainly the way to go. Keep training that way.
The day that you will have to really defend yourself against an aggression, your body will have to react *instinctively* and you will not have time to think. That’s why you should drill all series presented, and then gradually focus on the ones that come to you naturally. To paraphrase, *you certainly do not need to know the famous 10,000 techniques, but you should definitely drill the few ones that suit you for more than 10,000 times.*

This training focus is even more important for the offensive techniques with which you can preempt an attack, if needed. After trying and seriously drilling dozens of such possible attacks, you should choose *only the 3 most suitable ones and drill them like crazy*. Drill only those ones, for power, penetration, stealth, precision, full commitment. Drill them again and again until they can become automatic and unstoppable. Then drill them more. They’ll be there for you when and if the time comes…

➔

I had a student who trained in Martial arts only for the self-defense aspect. To be ready, just in case... When proficient, he started to concentrate on ***one*** offensive technique only. He was drilling it all the time. It was simply a Jab/Cross pulling the rear leg for a 'Low Kick' to the knee. He learned to be very powerful with it, always kicking 'through' with everything he had. He got used to make the kick very stealthy with the use of the hands. He drilled this offensive combination as a 'defensive' move: strike forward in the middle of the opponent's attack instead of blocking and retreating. And when the day came, this simple maneuver protected him from serious harm, getting rid of two aggressors in just twice " 1/2/3 ".
Learn, practice, drill and then start to ***focus***.

Good Luck!



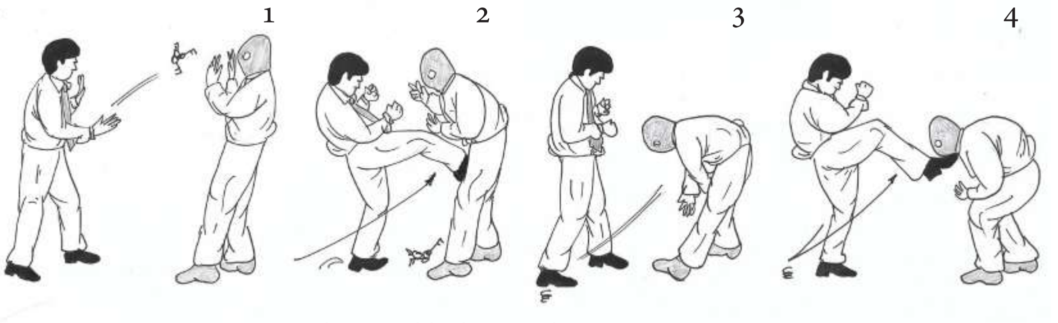
5.2. OFFENSIVE SERIES

Preemption is always better than defending and countering. And ***Stop-striking*** is second-best. The earlier you hit an assailant the better. Not only are these early techniques more effective, they also psychologically impress on your opponent that you are not a 'victim'. [The reader is invited to refer to our book about '*Stop Kicks*' for more general theories and techniques]

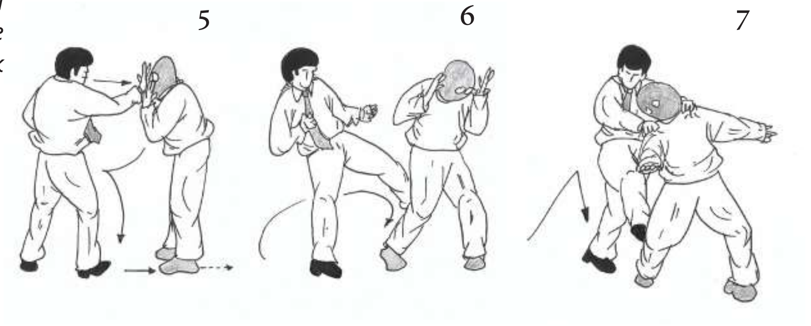
In the spirit of Israel's 6 Days War (1967), always take the initiative at the moment it becomes clear that a confrontation is inevitable. Once you understand that the fight cannot be avoided, or at the very moment you 'sense' that your opponent is about to launch (or just starts launching) his attack: go forward, strike and do not stop before he is vanquished. To an outside observer, it may seem that you are the attacker; but you are not, and better that than to be a victim... Just like in the Six Days War, you should aim at immediately neutralizing the fighting ability of your aggressor: destroy the limbs he needs to move and to strike.

The examples provided should be drilled as is; only when acquired and mastered, should you adapt them to your own affinities, but while respecting the ***Krav Maga Principles*** presented in the Introduction.

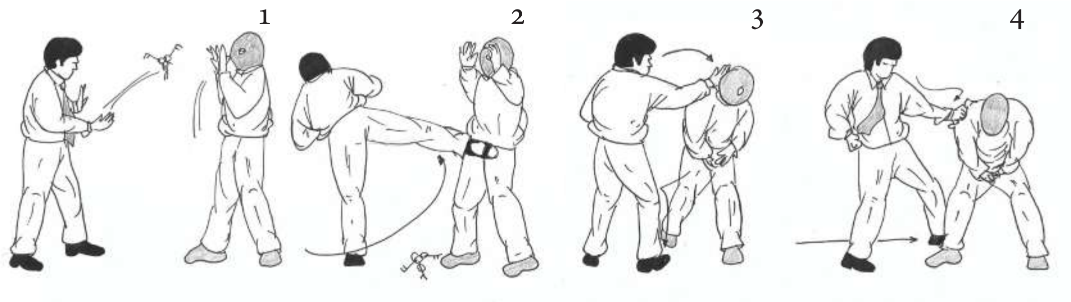
Our first example will underline the importance of always using your surroundings or anything that can help in a self-defense situation. See Illustrations at the top of next page. In this case, when confronted, you take the initiative by throwing anything you have towards the eyes of the opponent before he can attack you. Anything goes, especially if it is unexpected: your keys, small change from your pocket, a bag, a magazine, dirt or sand, a beverage,... Anything that will make him blink and lift his hands. You immediately follow with a *Front Kick to his groin*. Kick powerfully and *into* the target, *with full commitment and forward momentum*.. Lower your foot back and let it rebound on the floor for another powerful Front Kick, this time towards his *throat*, as he bends over in pain and lowers his hands towards his groin. Aim for the throat, but if you miss you'll still get the face. Deliver a Palm Strike to keep him busy as you lower your foot; strike through his hands if necessary to crush his *nose*. As he retreats or stumble backwards, aim a powerful Low Kick through his *knee* with precision (not the thigh but the knee joint). As you find yourself on his outward blind side, you can now stomp kick the back of his *knee* to make him unable to pursue you. Stomp through his knee, all the way to the ground.



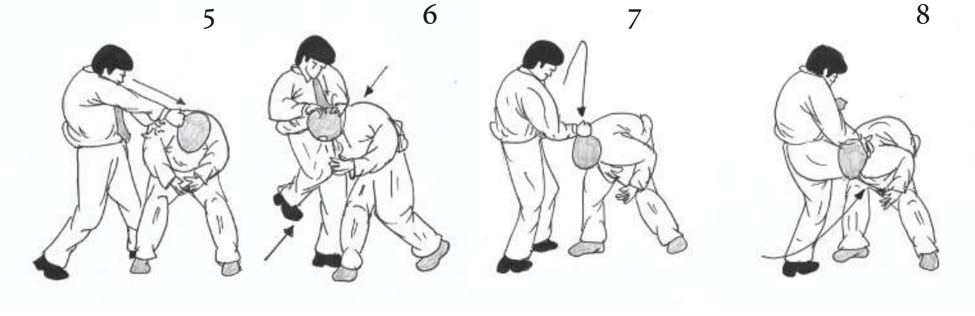
Throw suddenly something towards his eyes to cover the start of your Groin Kick



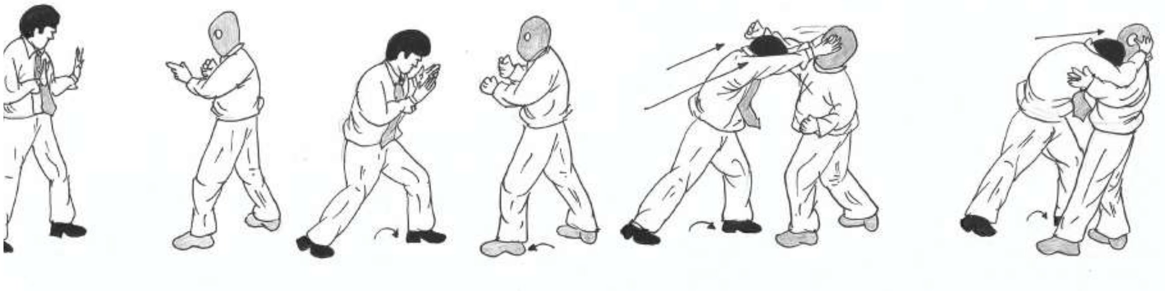
If the potential assailant stands in a side guard or in opposite guard to yours, you can replace the Front Groin Kick by a *rear-leg Roundhouse Kick*, as illustrated in the next Figures. Aim precisely for the *groin* area and start your 'Retzev'. Attack the side of his neck to allow the safe lowering of your kicking leg. Grab his shoulder as he bends over from the pain, and punch the side of his head. Aim for the ear, and if you miss, you can still get the temple or the jaw hinge. Catch his head for a Knee Strike to the nose, but keep his head down for a Hammer-fist strike to the back of his neck, followed by another Groin Kick, this time Upward Front kick that can connect with the foot, the ankle or the chin according to the relative distance.

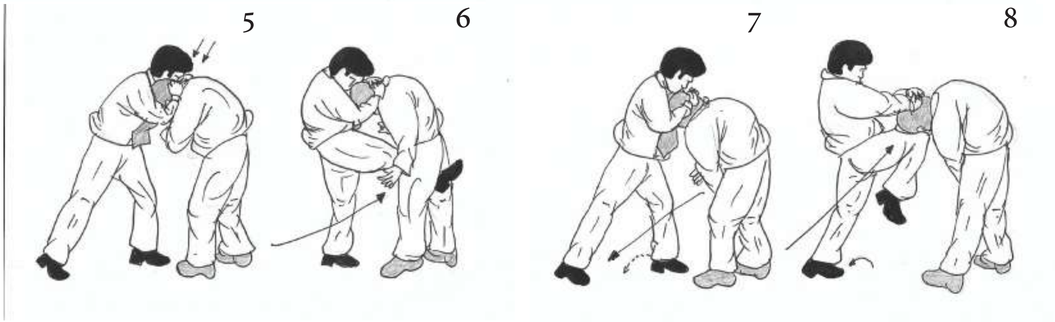


If more suitable, you can use a Roundhouse Groin Kick after the throwing diversion

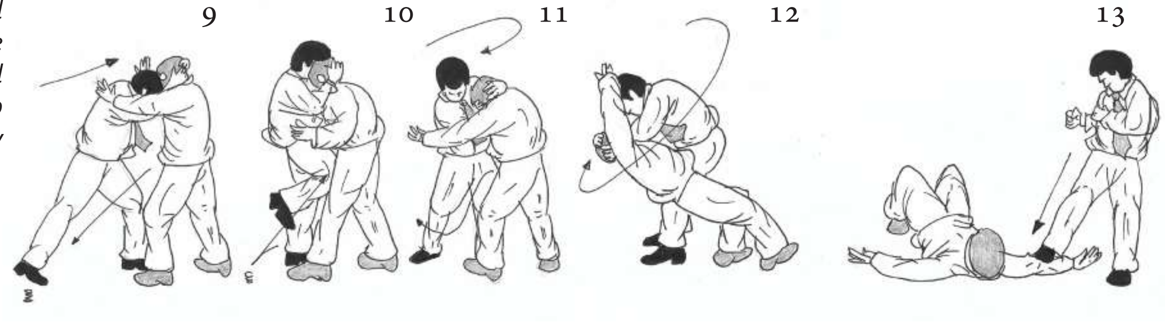


In the coming example, we illustrate an aggressive 'diving' towards the opponent, preferably just as he starts moving towards you to attack: he has not committed enough to be dangerous, but he is committed enough to be unable to change his momentum and his range calculations. That is ideal. By jumping forward, you completely foil his expectations and take the initiative. Remember that *Krav Maga* principles require you to be aggressive and offensive whenever possible. The Illustrations show clearly how you dive towards the assailant, while extending your hands towards his face, in a way that protects your head. Aim at *poking your thumbs into his eyes,* and smoothly catch his head (or ears). With the same momentum, you *head-butt him on the nose* (with your upper forehead, where the hair scalp starts). After the head-butt, pull his neck down and kick his groin with your rear leg, preferably with the upper ankle. Remember to kick up & through a few inches above the target. Let your kicking foot rebound on the floor for a powerful Knee Strike to his face, and then rebound again for a second Knee Strike to his groin. The reader notices easily the alternation of sensitive targets at different levels: *Retzev* at its best! You lower the kneeing leg while already pivoting into a dangerous *Head Twist Takedown*: you simply twist his head with both hands towards the ground in the deepest possible circular move [**Be extremely gentle and controlled in training, this is a potentially crippling technique!**]. Once he is on the ground, you can further neutralize him by stomping his elbow, his ankle or his fingers.

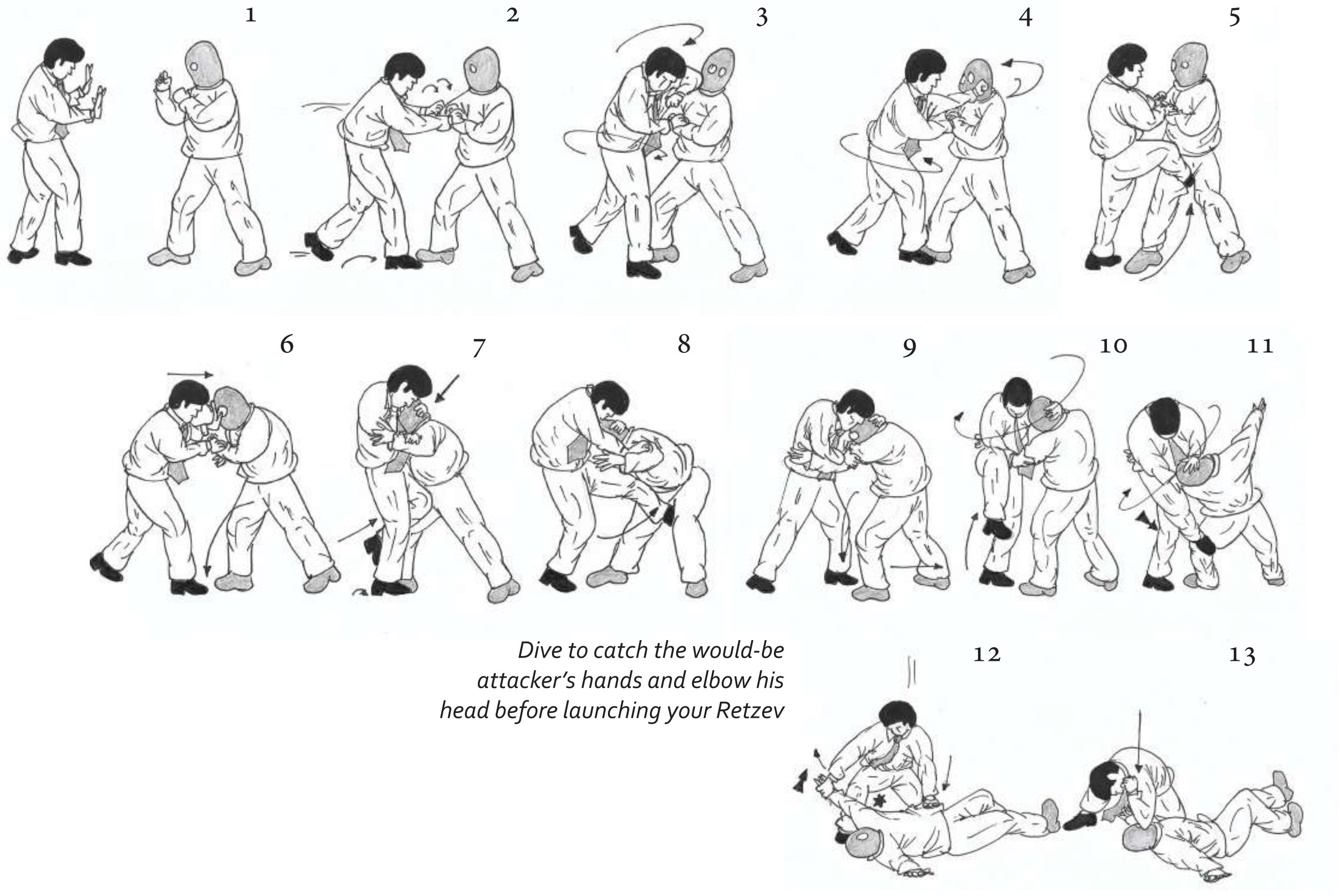




Dive in a protected way towards the attacker's eyes, and start to follow-up uninterruptedly



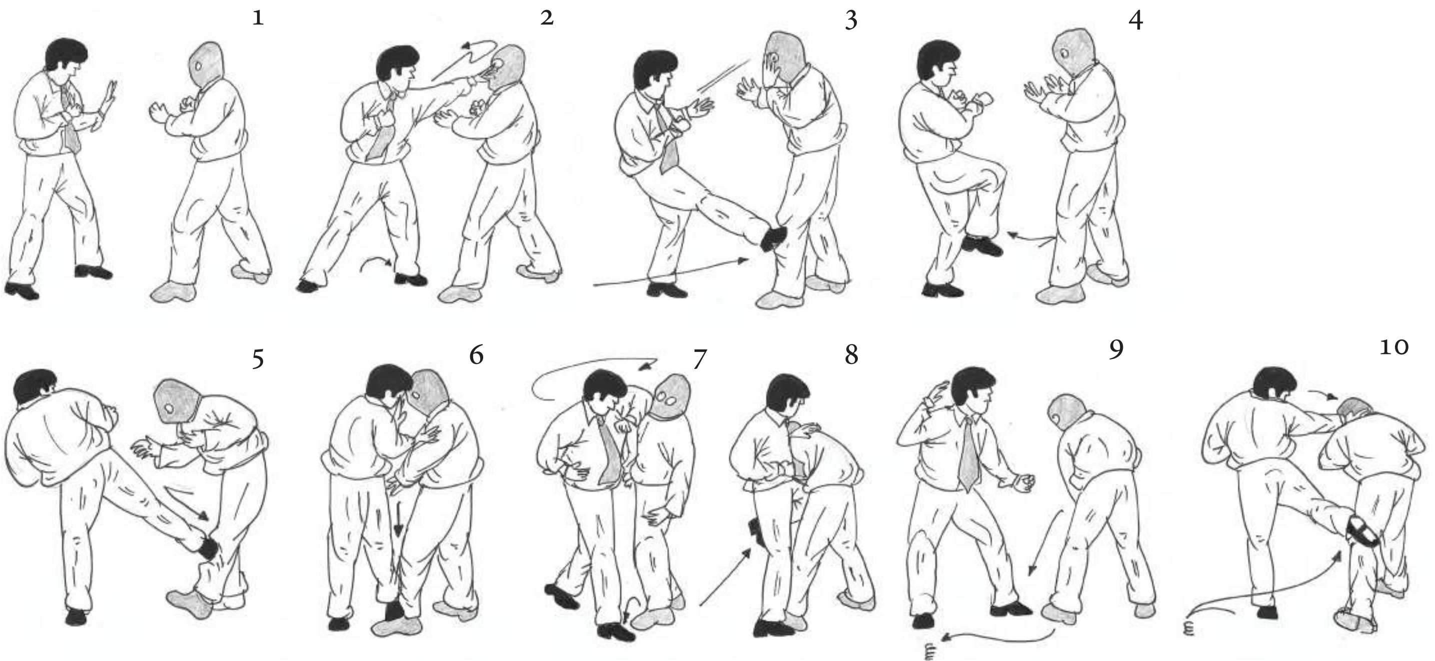
The next set of Drawings illustrates another way to ‘dive’ towards an assailant about to attack; a way that is particularly good against opponents with a high closed guard. You suddenly jump forward *while trying to catch the opponent’s wrists*, or at least to block any possible movement of his hands towards you. It is much easier than it seems, as you take the initiative unexpectedly when the opponent is just about to attack. You can then strike the *side of his head* with a circular *Elbow Strike* (use the hips), while letting go of one of his wrists very late in the strike. Pivot back with your hips while bringing back your arm in a Hammer-fist Strike to the other side of his head. Lift your front foot in a Front Ghost Groin Kick, kicking up a few inches into the testicles. While lowering your foot, you deliver a Palm Strike to his nose; if possible and adequate, let your fingers touch his eyes to overwhelm him. The striking hands goes then to catch the back of his neck as you knee his groin with a powerful rear-leg move. As he reels back, simply extend the leg into an Upward Groin Kick with the foot or the shin. Now is the time to bring him down with a Stomping Kick to the side of his knee, while you pull him down in a twist: pull on his arm and push violently on his head. As you should have kept hold of his arm all the way, you could pull his extended elbow sharply to your shin to cause joint damage (Keep control of his body while doing that). You can finish him up, for example with a downward Elbow Strike to the head.



Dive to catch the would-be attacker’s hands and elbow his head before launching your Retzev

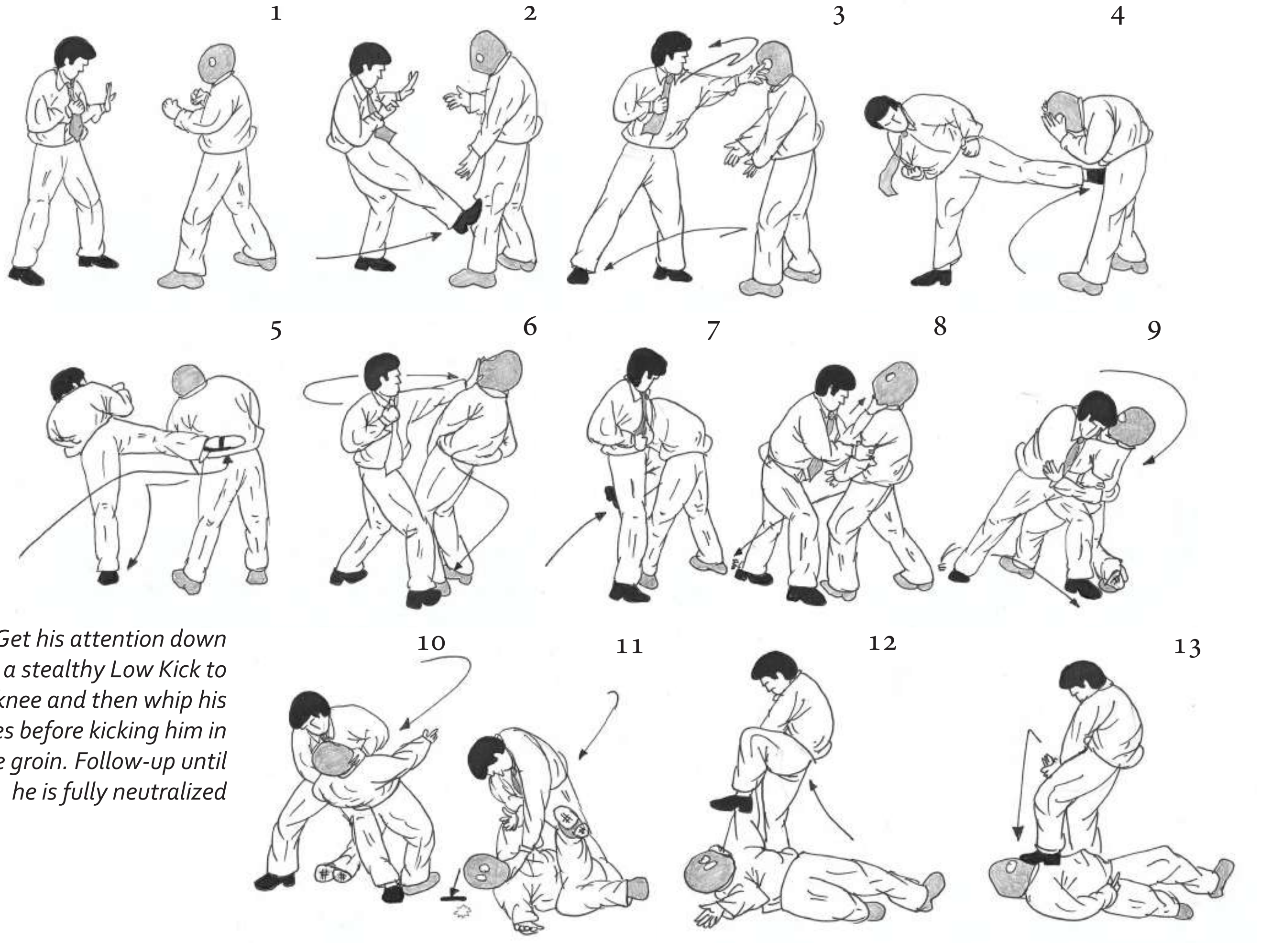
Another very useful opening is ***the Finger Whip***. This is a very simple and easy maneuver well worth drilling for its speed and effectiveness. You simply throw your relaxed fingers into the *eyes* of the assailant, You do not try to poke, but just whip (like with a towel) to 'crack' in the eyes area. This is an extremely fast strike, because the whole arm is completely relaxed: you do not need strength and precision like for a punch or a poke. You simply extend fast towards the eyes and pull back even faster. The fingers strike the eyes while passing in front, and the fast pulling-back create a powerful whipping undulation. This is very close in execution to the classic Backfist Strike of traditional Martial Arts (*Uraken Uchi* in *Karatedo*). In any case, nobody can prevent reacting to a fast strike towards the eyes.

While you retract your whipping arm, you deliver a Low Front Kick (Regular or 'Soccer') to the opponent's front *knee*. Chamber back and switch smoothly to a stomping Low Side Kick to the same knee. Kick 'into' the knee, not on its surface. Do not chamber back, but go down with the foot to stomp his ankle and the top of his foot. Crush his foot as if trying to obliterate it into the floor. Try to keep control of his front arm for additional safety (You can also Palm-strike his nose to keep him off-balance). Move your crushing foot out and strike with a Circular Elbow powered by the hips; aim for the ear (side of the face). Follow-up with a naturally-flowing Knee to the groin. Your opponent is already hurt, so you can lower the foot and pull back your front foot to gather momentum for an 'all-out' Low Kick through the knee. Of course, your own 'Retzev' could look different, once you have acquired some experience and let your own personality drive your follow-ups.



Open with an ultra-fast Finger Whip and a Low Front Kick, then start your Retzev

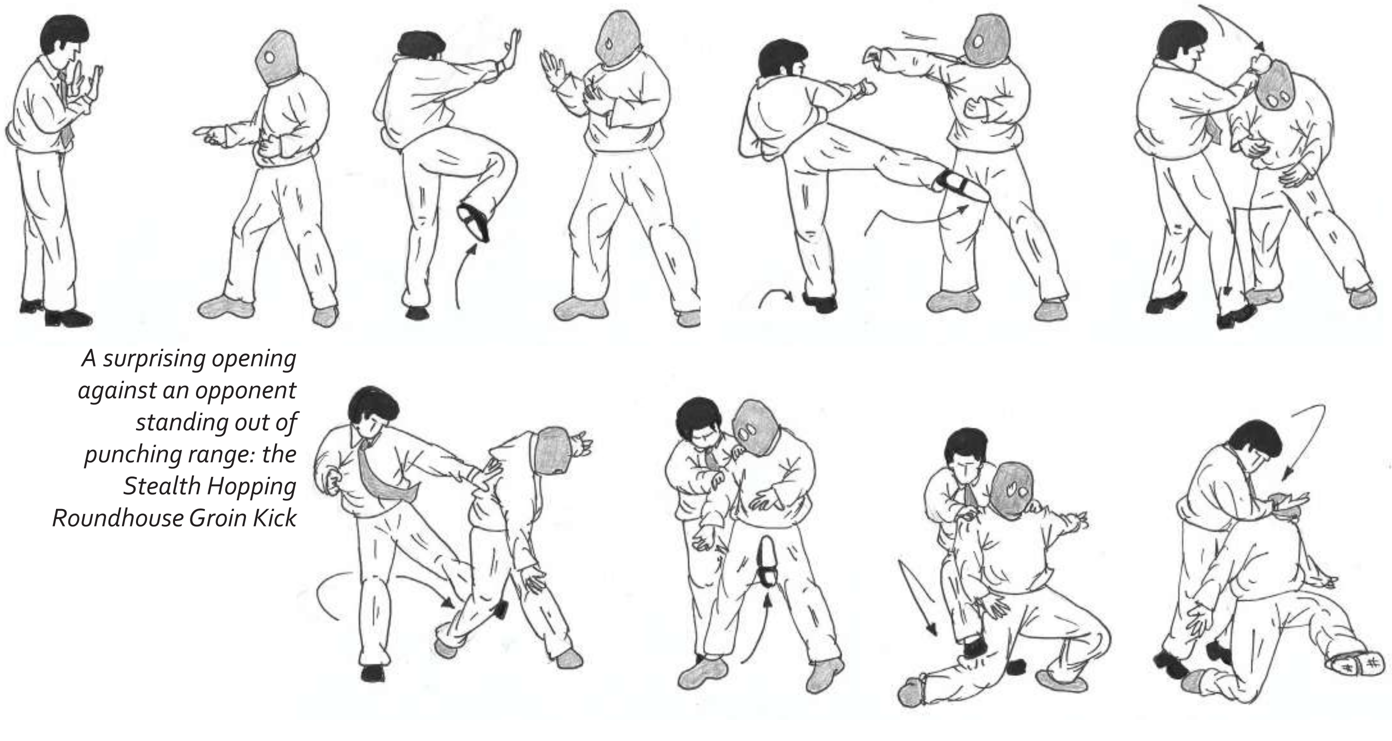
The coming Illustrations will show another way to use the all-important ***Finger Whip***: attack **low** first as a painful diversion, *then* rake his eyes. The *Front Low Kick* is a very fast, effective and stealthy kick, as described at length in our previous books 'Low Kicks' and 'Stealth Kicks'. Just make sure you keep your upper body as still as possible while executing the Kick. Aim for the *knee*, preferably just below it, and kick a few inches *into* the target before retracting the leg. While retracting the kicking foot, whip towards his eyes while his attention is down. Immediately, use your front leg to fast Roundhouse-kick his groin, hopping forward if necessary. This is a fast combination executed with relaxed muscles and that is well-worth drilling a lot to make it natural. Now that your opponent has been kicked in the testicles, you can start your *Retzev*. Suggested here is: a rear-leg fully-powered Roundhouse Kick to the kidneys (Lower Back), a hip-powered Palm Strike to the nose as you lower the kicking leg, a Knee Strike to the groin (again) and then, a throat-holding Takedown of your flustered opponent. For that, you strike his throat with the part of the hand between your thumb and your forefinger, and then you grip his Adam's apple. Keep control of his arm, place your rear leg behind his front one as if for an Outer Reap Throw and twist him down in a spiral over this leg. Make sure you keep the Throat Squeeze and use your whole body to twist him down. Bang his head on the floor, and stomp his armpit to neutralize his arm.



Get his attention down with a stealthy Low Kick to the knee and then whip his eyes before kicking him in the groin. Follow-up until he is fully neutralized

There are many techniques that can be used for a pre-emptive attack, and we cannot present them all.

We shall close this Chapter with a last opening: a ***Stealth Hopping Small Roundhouse Kick to the groin***. It is important to keep the upper body immobile for as long as possible, and hop towards the opponent as late as possible in the execution. The maneuver is best used when the potential assailant is far enough from you to feel secure. You will lift your hand up to draw his attention while you lift your front leg to start a Small Roundhouse. It is only after the foot is on its way that you will hop towards the opponent, just enough to reach his groin. Bend slightly rearwards to avoid a possible Stop Punch. Once the opponent bends over in pain, follow up: a Hammer-fist Strike to the back or the side of his neck and a powerful Low Kick through the side of his knee. You can now 'own' his back for the finish: an Upwards Groin Kick from behind, followed by a Stomp Kick to crush his knee into the ground. If the altercation is very serious, you can conclude with a Knife-hand Strike to his throat that you can expose by pulling his head back. In more civilized settings, you can simply hammer-fist his nose and leave it at that....



A surprising opening against an opponent standing out of punching range: the Stealth Hopping Roundhouse Groin Kick

5.3. Defenses against Punches

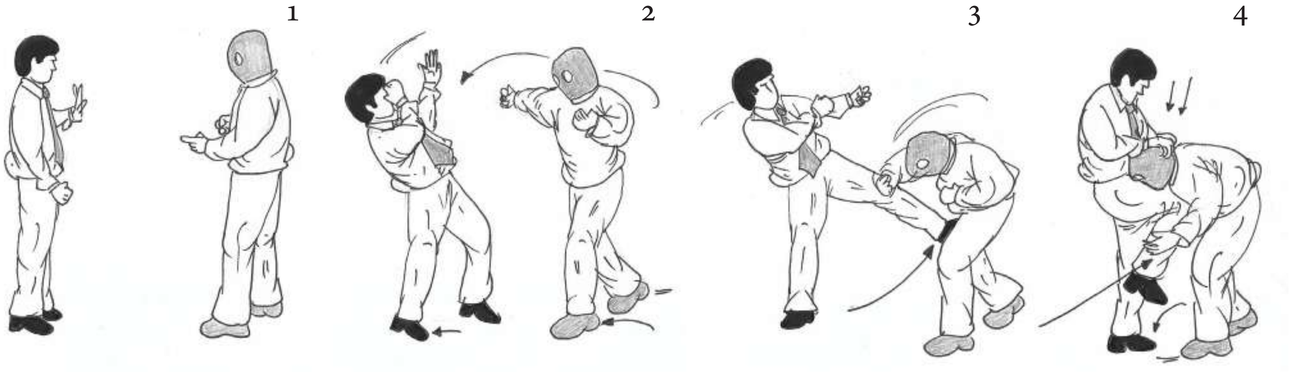
There are all kinds of punching attacks and all kinds of ways to cope with them. Of course, the best course of action is always to preempt the attack as soon as you discern that the confrontation is inevitable. Of course, it is not always possible and we will examine three broad categories of Punching Attacks: the Haywire Punching from far away, the Punching Flurry and the more traditional ‘regular’ Punching.
The reader is invited to note that, from this point on, the book will present shorter examples of *Retzev* in the Applications. The principles of ‘Retzev’ have been made very clear by the previous examples and the reader will easily develop his own preferences according to his affinities and psychology. We will still scatter a few longer examples here and there for completeness, but it is the basic defense technique that will be underlined from now on. This does not mean that the ‘Retzev’ follow-up is not necessary: not at all! ***Retzev*** importance has been made clear but is now left to the reader.

3.1 The Haywire Punch

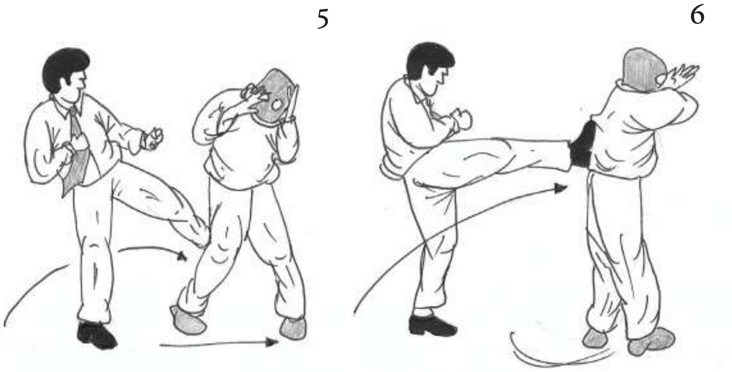
Haywire Punching is the wide range punches from out of range with the opponent rushing you. You can see the attack from far away, but it is still a very dangerous situation, because the attack comes with lots of energy from the momentum and the wide trajectory. If you get struck, it is a serious blow and probably the start of a series of subsequent punches.

The best approach against such an attack is ***Stop-kicking***. In the first example, presented at the top of next page, you are a bit surprised by the sudden launch of the rushing punch and you slightly retreat to allow for a *Front Stop Kick* to the attacker’s *groin*. Lean rearwards while kicking to keep out of trouble. Kick forcefully up *into* the groin. Remember that you have to stop the assailant in his tracks and that a surface strike will not suffice. As he stops and steps back in pain, you can follow-up with a Knee Strike to the nose and a low Kick to the knee that will make him pivot and present his back. A powerful Penetrating Front Kick to his kidneys (lower back) could be the start of your own Retzev, but everything else goes.

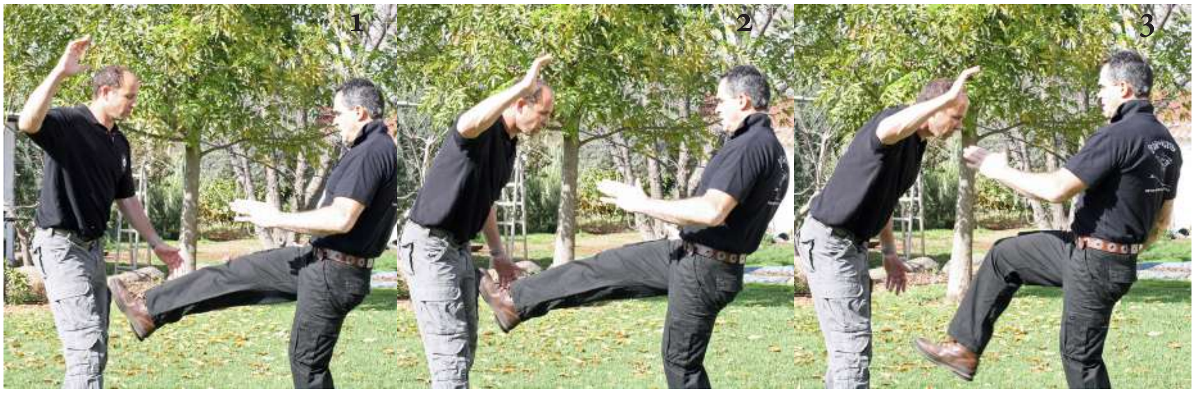
➔



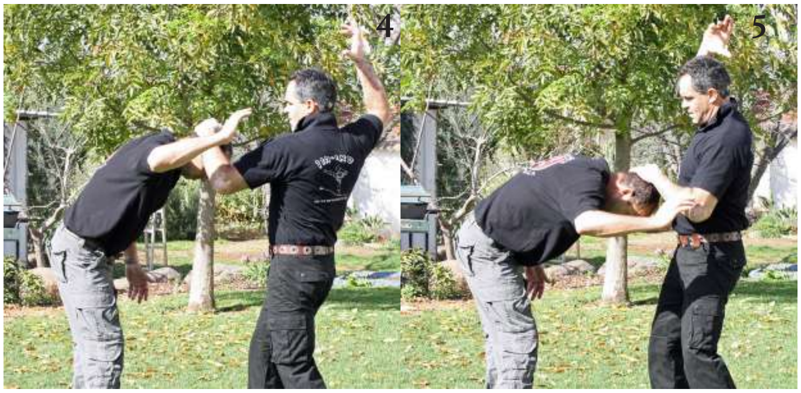
For a Haywire Punch you see coming, lean back and stop it with a Front Groin Kick; follow-up, for example, with Knee Strike (face), Low Kick (knee) and Front Kick (kidneys)



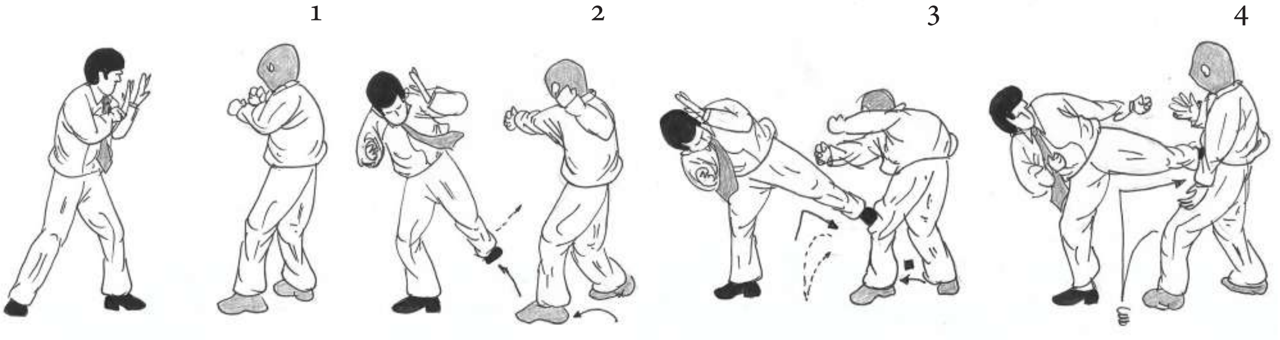
Another way to follow up on the *Groin Stop Kick* would be to catch his head to place it in position for a powerful *Knife-hand Strike to the back of his neck*, as illustrated in the following Photos.

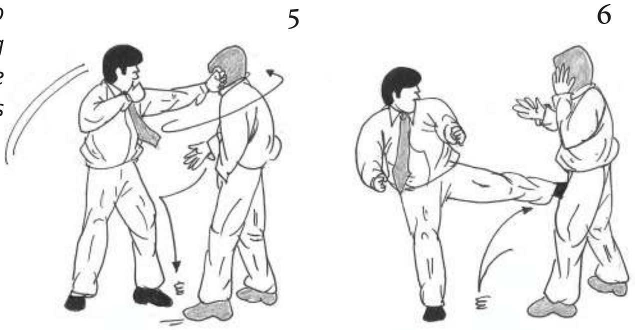


After the Groin Stop Kick, you could start your 'Retzev' with a Downward Strike to the Cervical Vertebrae



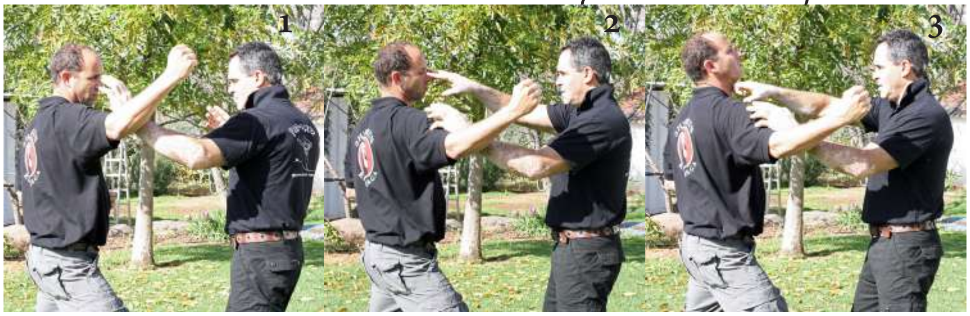
Of course, the Stop Kick could easily be a ***Side Stop Kick*** to the *knee* that will stop his forward movement. Remember to kick forcefully *through* the knee to inflict damage. You can follow up with a rebounding Side Kick to his Floating Ribs, and then a Hammer-fist or a Back-fist Strike to the side of his head (Temple, ear, or mandibular joint). This will get his attention up and open his groin for a fast Roundhouse. Keep at it!



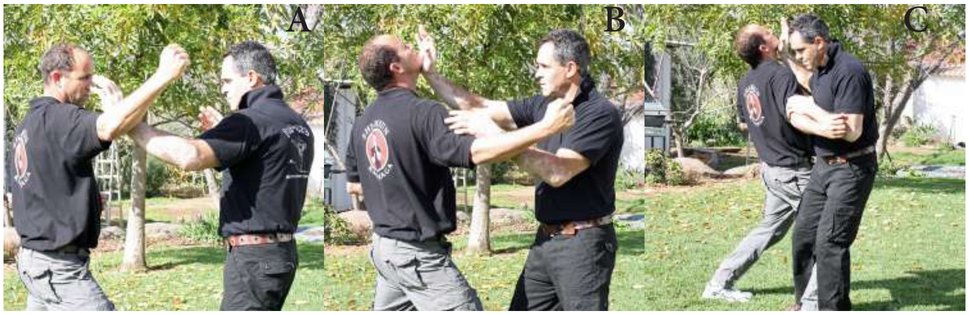


A Side Stop Kick to the knee will also deal with a rushing punch; let the leg rebound for a repeat Side kick to the floating ribs

Of course, a regular ***Block & Counter*** is always a possibility for such a clear attack. Go forward towards it and remember that *blocking* means: 'striking the incoming limb with force in order to cause it damage'. Block the incoming wide Hook Punch by striking the arm with your Forearm or Knife-hand. Immediately (**nearly simultaneously**!) follow up with a crippling Counter like those illustrated in the Photos below, and of course, add your own 'Retzev'.



Block forcefully and simultaneously strike the opponent's eyes or throat

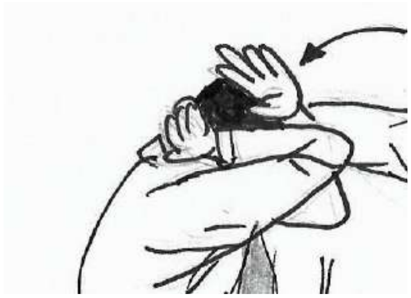


You could also block and then counter with an Upward Palm Strike to the chin that flows naturally into an Outer Reap Takedown; makes sure the opponent falls on his head

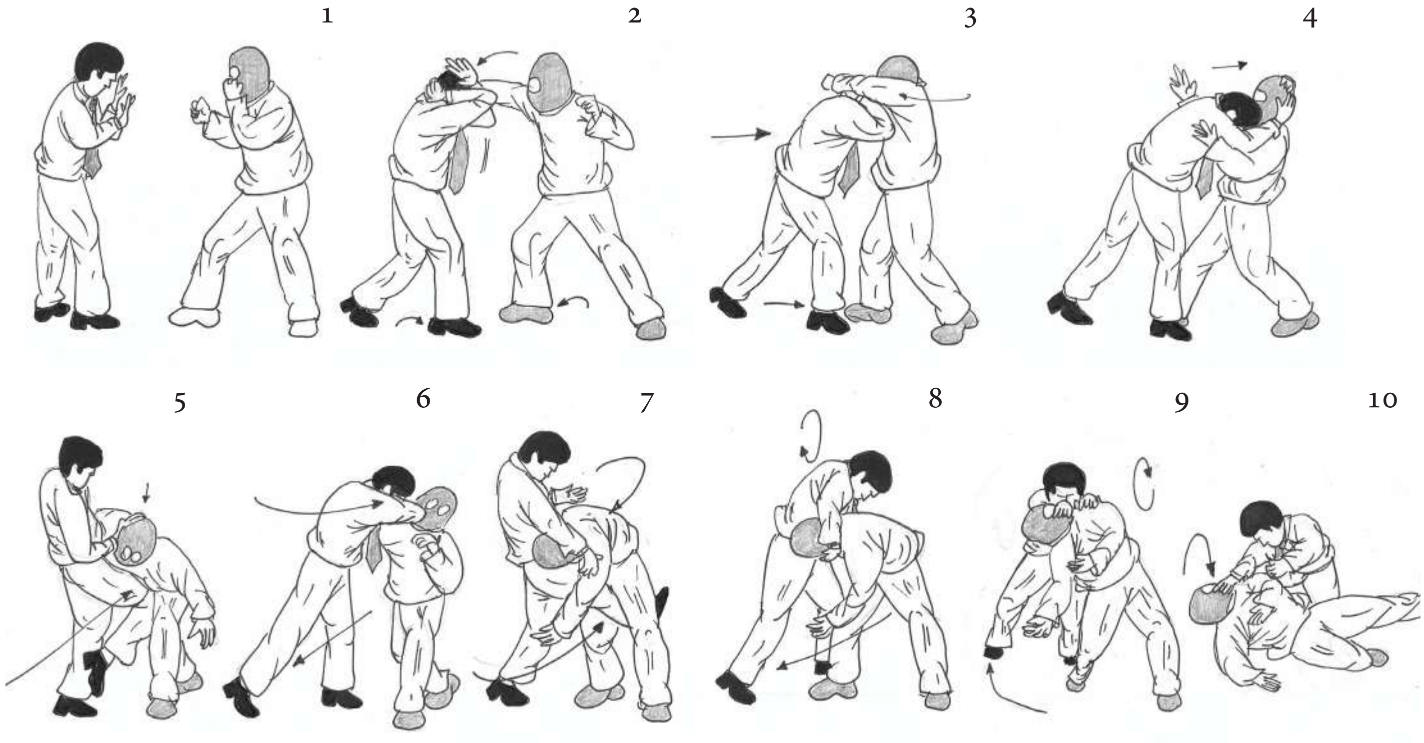
3.2 The Punching Flurry

The ***Punching Flurry*** is much more difficult to deal with, especially if you have been taken by surprise. The assailant is close and throws short punches in series, none fully committed, but all dangerous. As soon as he will score 'a good one', the attacker will start his own *Retzev*. This is the typical careful *Jab/Cross/Jab* approach of the trained boxer. *Blocking is of no use* as the punching arm is immediately retracted while the other one is already on its way.
There are 2 basic ways to deal with the Punching Flurry: *Evade* or *Jam*. **Evading** is not to be where his punches are directed by going down, rearwards, sideways or any combination of those. **Jamming** is protecting yourself while proactively diving towards his punches for a close-combat aggressive series. A few examples will make all this clear.

The more '*Krav Maga*' option is always the aggressive assault one. So, when attacked with a flurry of punches to the head, you protect yourself tightly with your elbows as illustrated. And you immediately *dive* forward *towards* the opponent, which he will not expect. It is possible that you will be hit on the way, but not only are you protected enough to absorb some of it, but all the range calculations and the expectations of your opponent are foiled. You are effectively jamming his attacks and you are scoring a serious psychological blow: you are not retreating like an easy prey, but you are on the contrary attacking with no fear. Once in range, catch his head and use your forward momentum for a *Head Butt* to the center of his face (*nose*). The movement will then flow naturally, nearly automatically, into a Groin Knee Strike, followed by an Elbow Strike to the side of the head or the side of the neck. A great follow-up from this position goes through another Groin Strike, with the shin this time, while you get hold of his chin from above and around. You'll have then to proceed slowly and carefully in training for a *Chin Twist Takedown*. Twist him by the chin (and shoulder) to take him down to the ground and try to slam his head into the ground. **Be very careful, as a brusque Chin Twist is extremely dangerous and potentially lethal**. Let the circumstances dictate your behavior.
The series is illustrated at the top of next page.



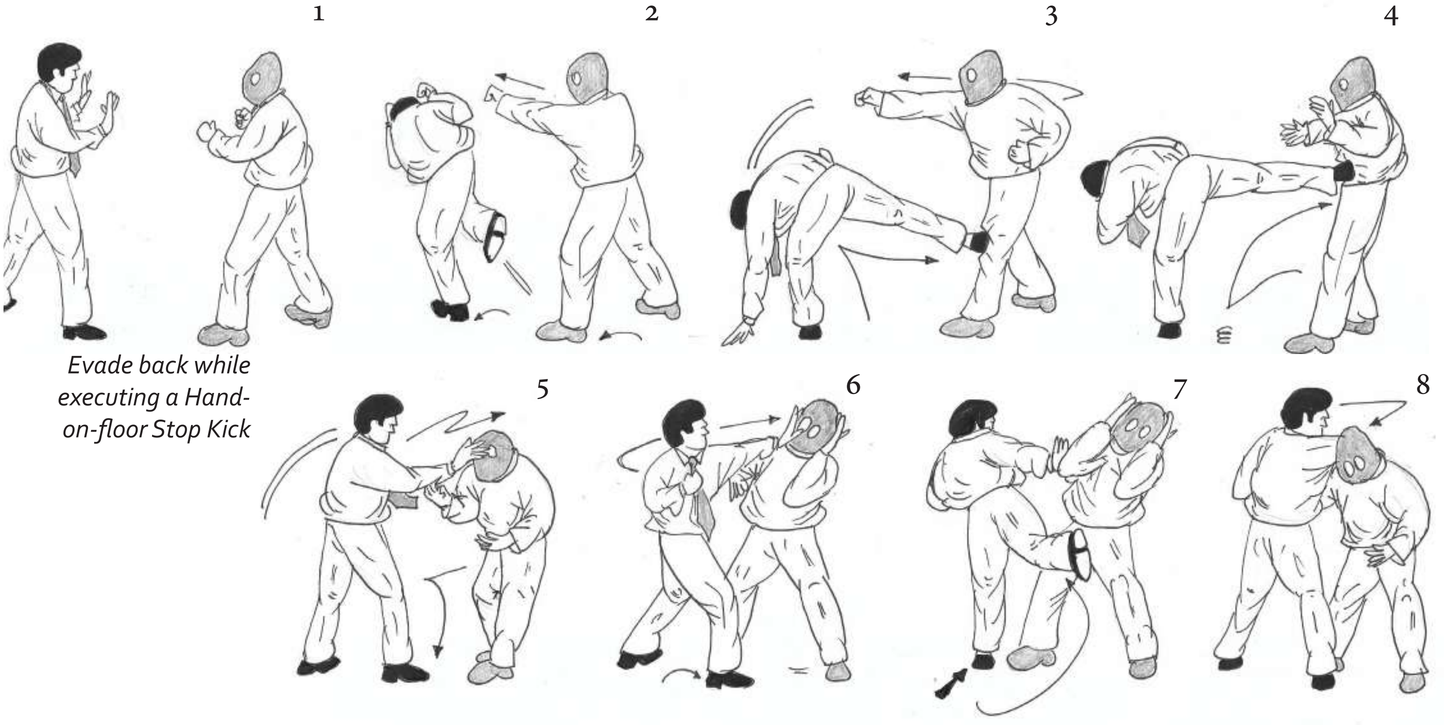
➡



Protect your head by forming a 'helmet' with your arms and dive in

The other possibility is to ***evade and counter***. If you are surprised by a sudden rush with a flurry of Punches, the best way is probably to slightly retreat and bend the trunk away from the Punch. The good side of it, is that it places you in ideal position for a simultaneous 'Body-bent' or 'Hand-on-floor' Kick.

The next Figures, at the top of next page, illustrate how you retreat, bend and simultaneously kick the assailant's forward knee. Once he is stopped, let your kicking foot rebound on the floor to attack his floating ribs or groin area with another *Body-bent Side Kick*. Of course, you need to keep the initiative. You could whip towards his eyes as you straighten up, and crush his face with a hip-powered Palm Strike. As his attention is now definitely up, you can now execute an Outward Ghost Groin Kick with all your body in it. Finish by coming back with a Lateral Elbow Strike to his neck.



Evade back while executing a Hand-on-floor Stop Kick

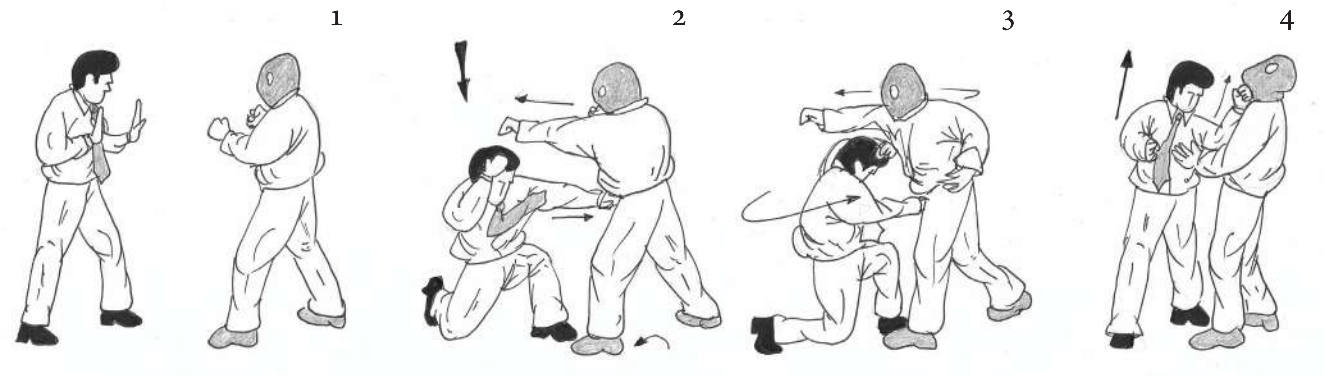
The other way to evade a punching combination is ***by going down***, under the punches. Punching flurries usually attack the head; if you go down on one knee (while still guarding your head), you will surprise the assailant who is launched to punch in the air above you. The effect of ***surprise*** is, all other parameters constant, a great equalizer. The motto of the *Mossad*, the much respected Israeli Secret Service, is in Biblical Hebrew something like :

"By way of deception, thou shalt make war" (בתחבולות תעשה לך מלחמה).

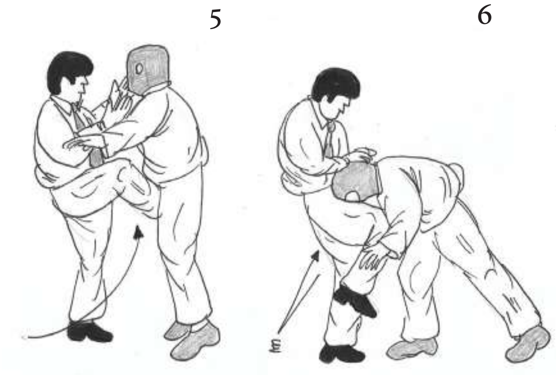
That is what we shall be doing here. It is true that such a move is not without danger, but its brazenness and unexpectedness, make it a very effective move. The reader is invited to consult our book about '*Stealth Kicks*' and to remember that surprising tactics are to be used parsimoniously, lest they lose their effect.

In our example illustrated at the top of next page, you go down on one knee, *under* the *Jab/Cross* combination rushing your way. You simultaneously punch your assailant's *groin* with your own Jab/Cross. Strike forcefully and penetrate into the target to send a shock wave through the area. Stand up with an Uppercut to the throat (or chin if you miss) and finish the opponent with a Stealth Groin Kick and a Knee Strike to the nose as he bends in pain. You could continue with another Groin Kick (Regular Upward Front Kick) if necessary, but it should have been enough.

➔



Surprise you kneel below the punching flurry and strike the so-close testicles of the unsuspecting attacker



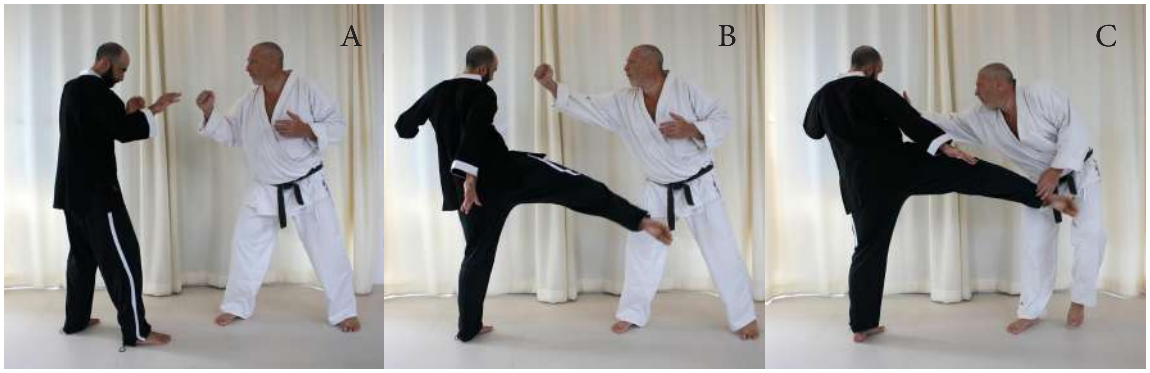
3.3 *More traditional Punches*

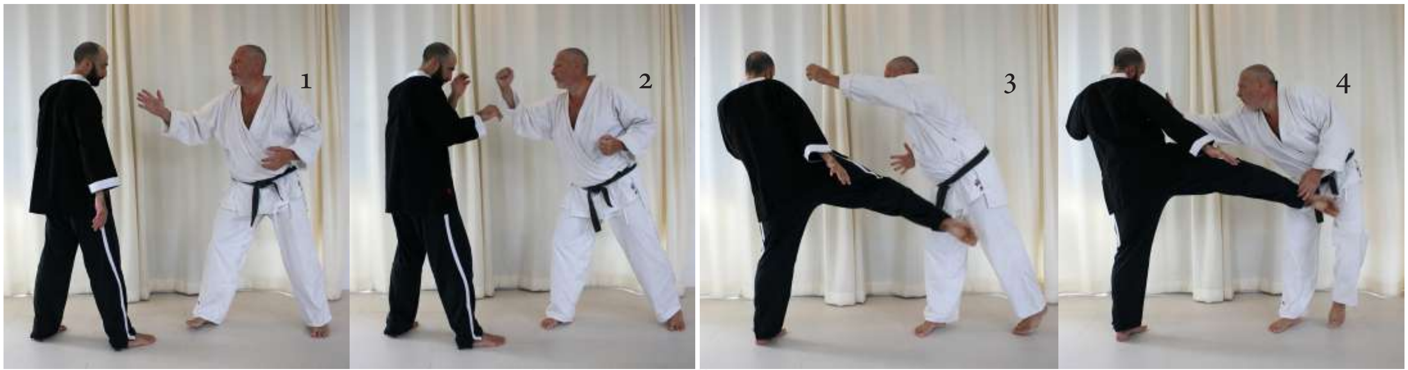
This section will deal briefly with the more traditional punches and with the classic way to handle them. *Krav Maga* will always favor the *Stop Kick* or the *Stop Punch* when dealing with a striking attack. Only when there is no choice, will the Artist use the classic 'Block and Counter' *with the mindset of starting the counter as early as possible*. The coming Photos (next page) illustrate the most appropriate Stop Kicks against regular straight punches from normal range: *Small Roundhouse to the groin and Side Kick to the floating ribs*. Obviously, a kick to the groin will stop a punch in mid-trajectory. And the same happen if you side-kick the ribs that are 'opened' by the execution of the Punch itself. Stop-kicking requires some bending back in order to place the head just out of reach of the punch; it is very natural and even helps the delivery of the Kick.

What is left after one of these Stop Kicks is to start your own *Retzev*; I have found that a "*same-leg Stomping Side Kick to the back of the knee*" is a good follow-up to be built upon.

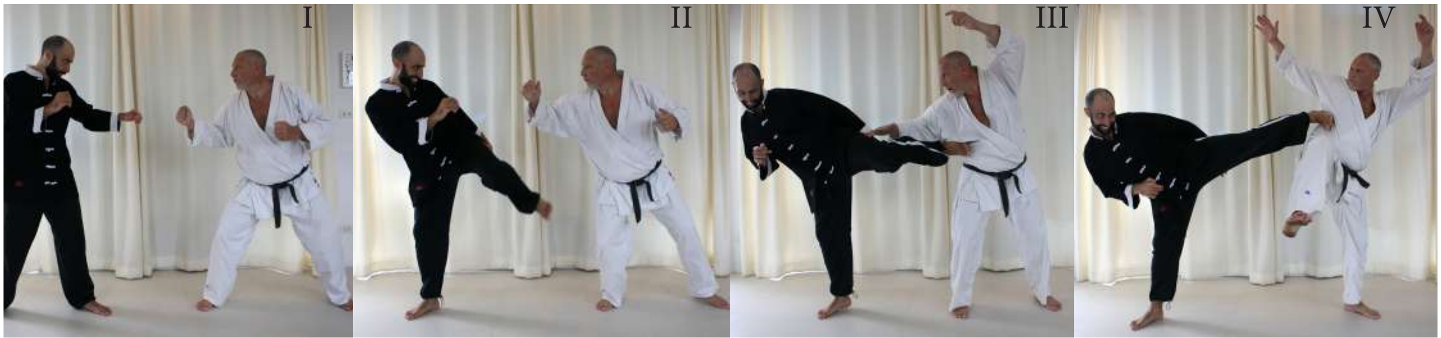
➔

Stealthy Groin Roundhouse against a Jab

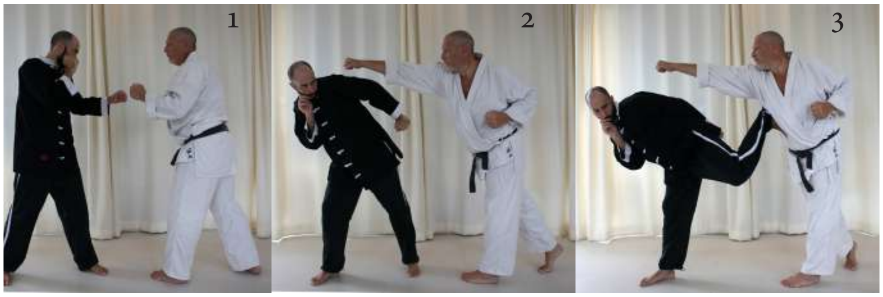




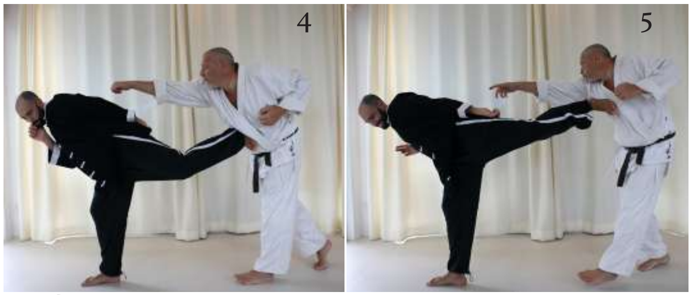
Stealthy Groin roundhouse against a Cross

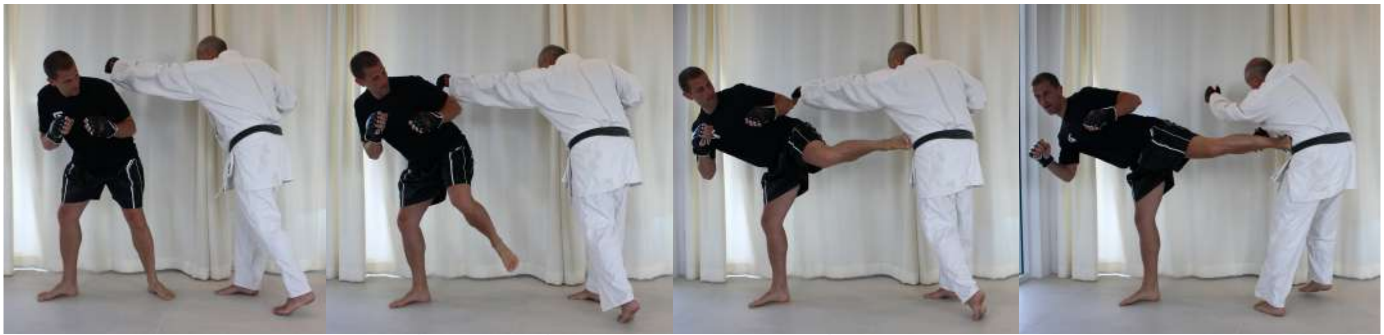


Side Kick to the floating ribs opened up by the opponent's jab itself



Side Kick to the floating ribs against a Cross

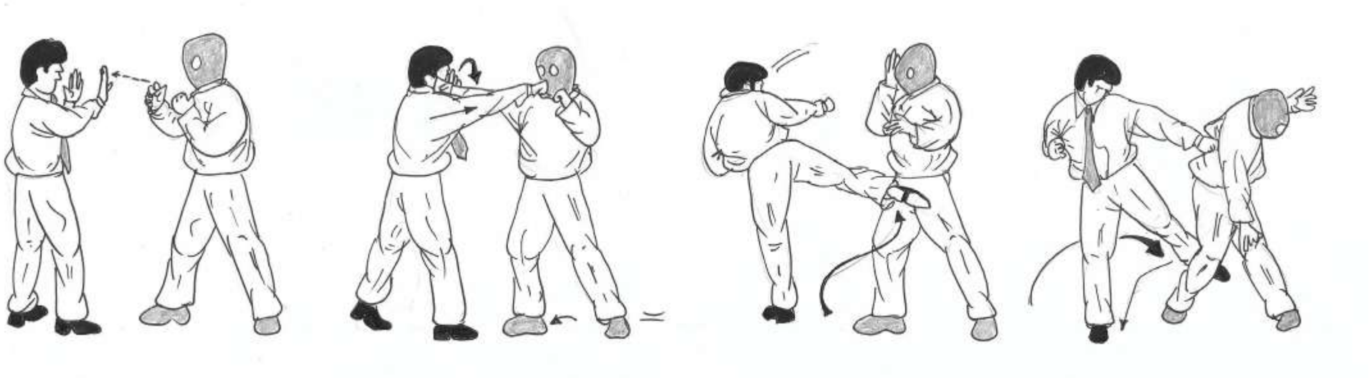




Same Side stop Kick against a Cross punch in opposite stances

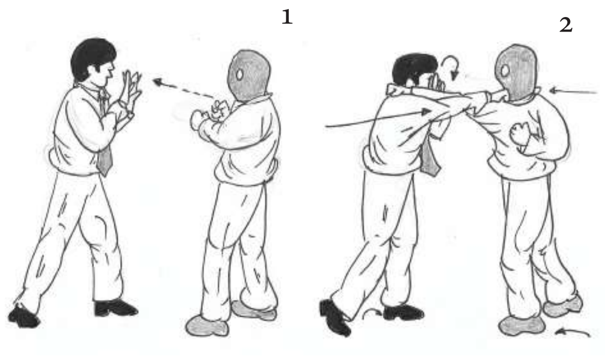
Stop Punches are the next best approach; but they will require some angling out and some control of the incoming punch, *unlike Stop Kicks that usually will require simple bending back out of range*. The most effective approach is the simultaneous '**Block & Punch'**; it requires training and the mindset of going forward into an attack, but it is surprisingly easy to perform.

Our first example in the Figures below illustrates how to tackle a *Jab* attack with an *Outside 'Block' and a simultaneous Inside Jab*. The principle is pretty simple, but it requires drilling for proficiency. The technique is very naturally followed by a front-leg Groin Roundhouse Kick and a subsequent 'Low Kick' to the opponent's front knee.

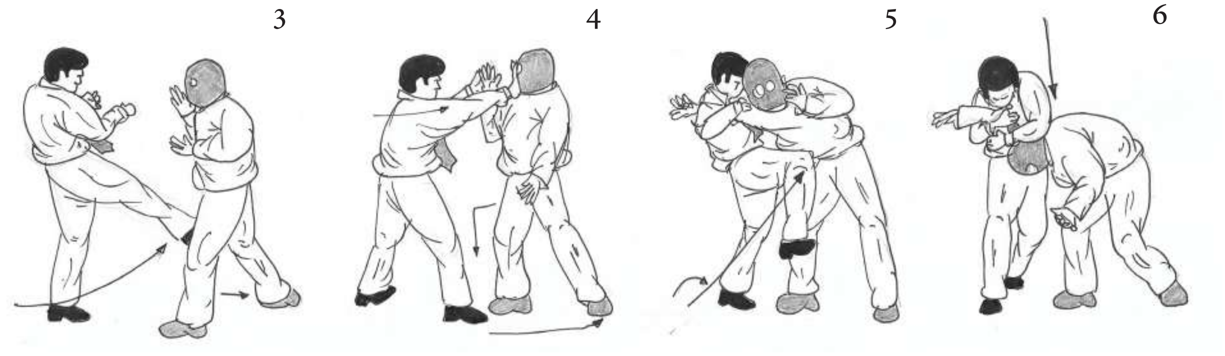


Simultaneous 'Parry & Punch' against a Jab, and follow-up

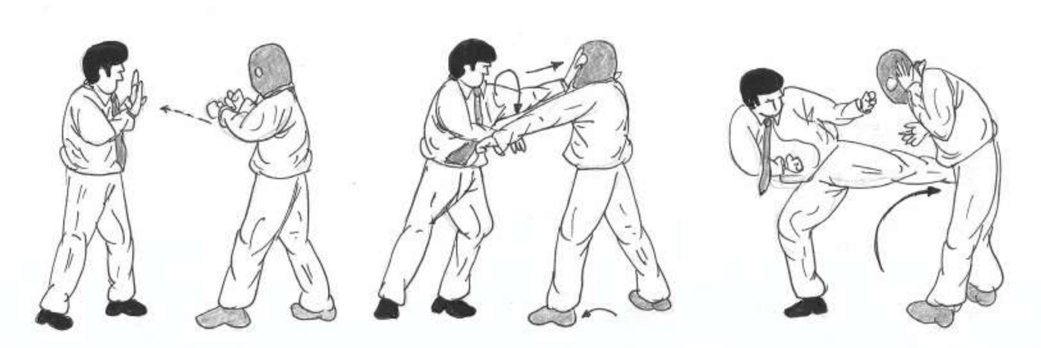
Of course, the same technique is applicable to dealing with a *Cross Punch*. The second set of Drawings, at the top of next page, shows how it is done and followed by a different *Retzev*: Front Groin Kick, Palm Strike to the nose, Knee strike to the floating ribs, and Downward Elbow Strike to the back of the neck.



Simultaneous 'Parry & Punch' against a Cross Punch, and follow-up

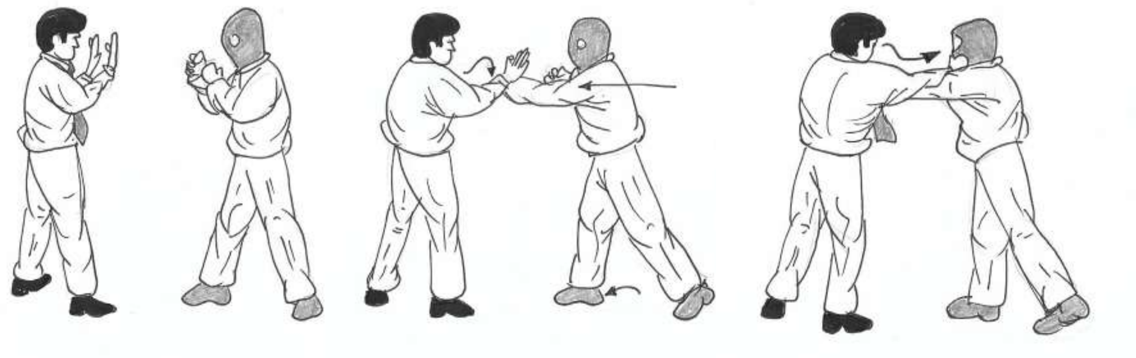


A last example of *simultaneous 'Block & Punch'* is presented in the following Illustrations. The Block is a classic 'Enveloping Downward Block' that takes the incoming *Jab* 'down and out' from above. The simultaneous Strike is a front hand Palm attack to his nose, with your fingertips in the general area of his eyes. You could follow then with a fast front-leg Groin Roundhouse Kick.



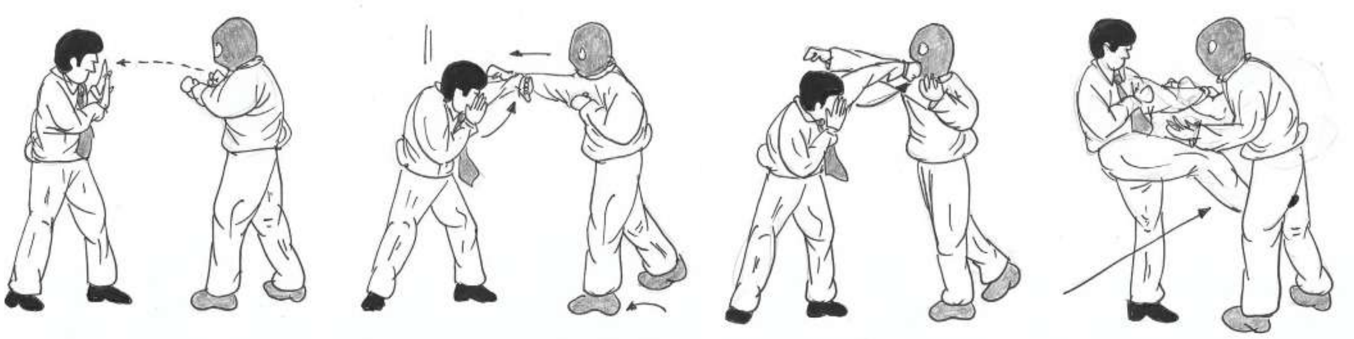
Downward Block of a Jab with a simultaneous front-hand Palm Strike

Sometimes, a simultaneous 'Block and Counter' is not possible, and the best next option is a ***Block that turns into a Strike***. Remember that, in *Krav Maga*, it is important to regain the initiative as fast and as early as possible. In the first example (illustrated at the top of next page), you parry a *Cross* from the outside and then extend your arm over his (pressing it down and in) to become a Punch to his face. While doing this, you use your hips to power the Punch and to take you out of the center-line. Start your own *Retzev* from here.



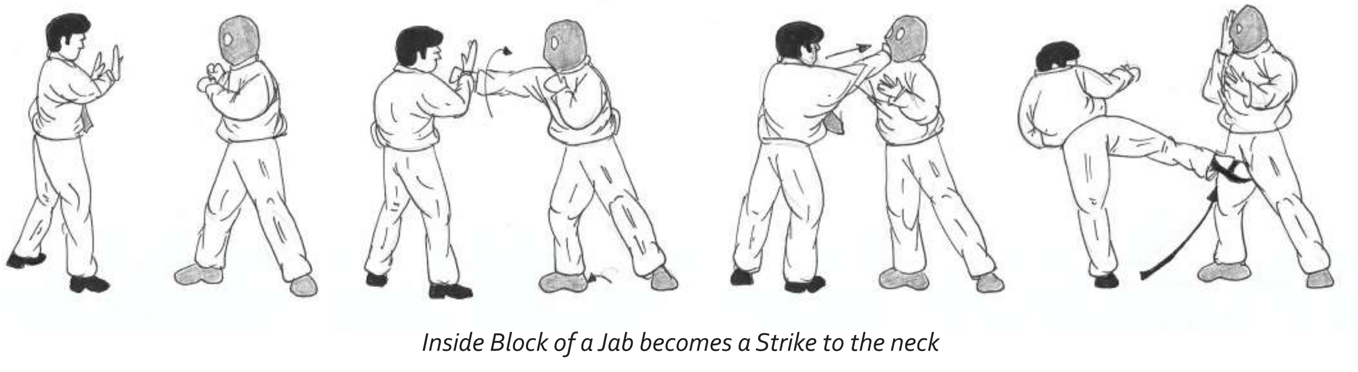
Outside Block of a Cross becomes a Punch to the face

Another example follows and presents an *Upward Parry turning into a Punch*. In this technique, you duck below a Cross Punch while parrying upwards with your front hand. Your arm then extends naturally towards his throat (or chin) slightly from below. The proposed start of the follow-up is an Upward Front Kick to the groin, as illustrated below.



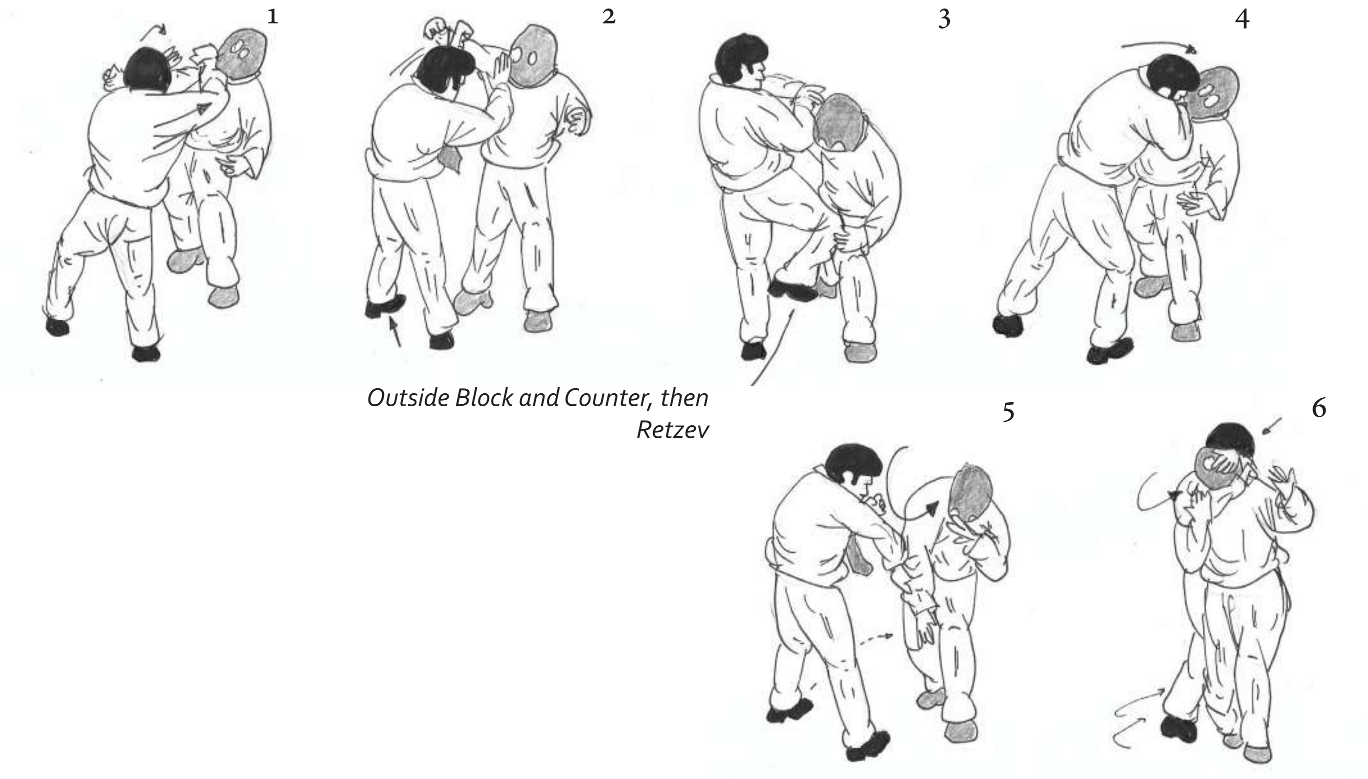
Upward Parry of a Cross becomes a Strike to the throat

And now, the next set of Drawings illustrates the classic *Inside Knife-hand Block turning naturally into a Knife-hand or Forearm Strike to the throat* or the side of the neck. Our example is against a Jab and is followed by a fast front-leg Groin Roundhouse kick. Take it from there...



Inside Block of a Jab becomes a Strike to the neck

Of course, sometimes, these quasi-simultaneous techniques are not possible. You just have time to block and use the other hand to keep covered. The idea is now ***to counter as fast and as early as possible***. It will be a classic '**Block and Counter**', but the *Krav Maga* philosophy is (1) to go on the offensive as fast as possible (even if it endangers you a little), (2) to counter towards the most sensitive targets possible, and (3) to keep hitting without hiatus. In our example below, you go towards the Hook Punch to block it and keep this forward-and-out momentum to strike the attacker's throat with the forearm of the other (rear) arm. Keep control of his arm while following up by kneeing his groin and headbutting his face. You can then use his arm to pull him around and get his back. Set a Rear Choke while strengthening your control, preferably with your fingers in his eyes.



Outside Block and Counter, then Retzev

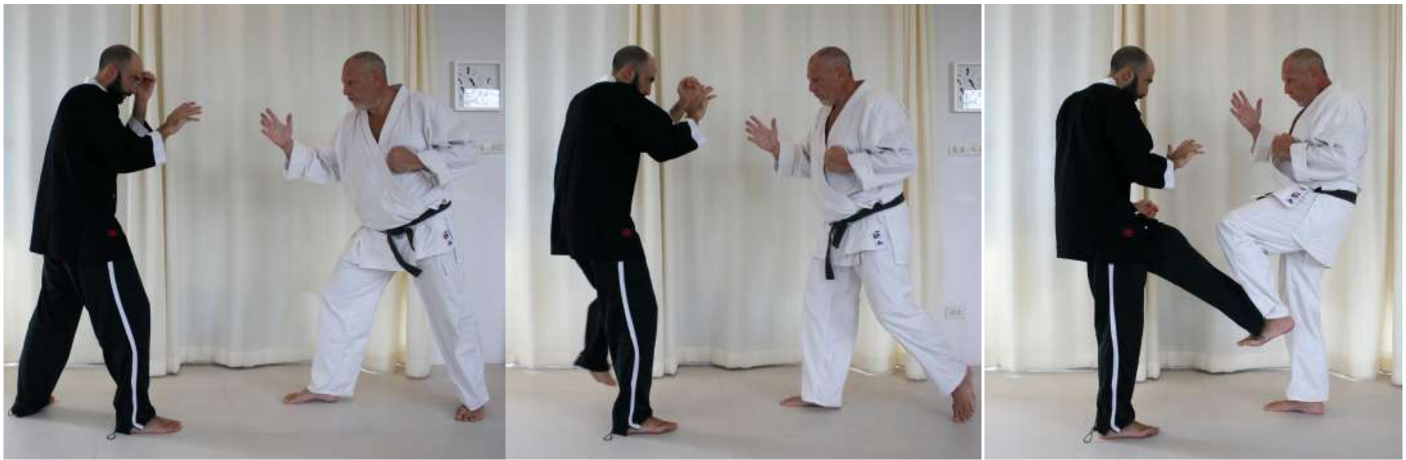
A lifetime of training for just ten seconds.
~Jesse Owens

5.4. DEFENSES AGAINST KICKS

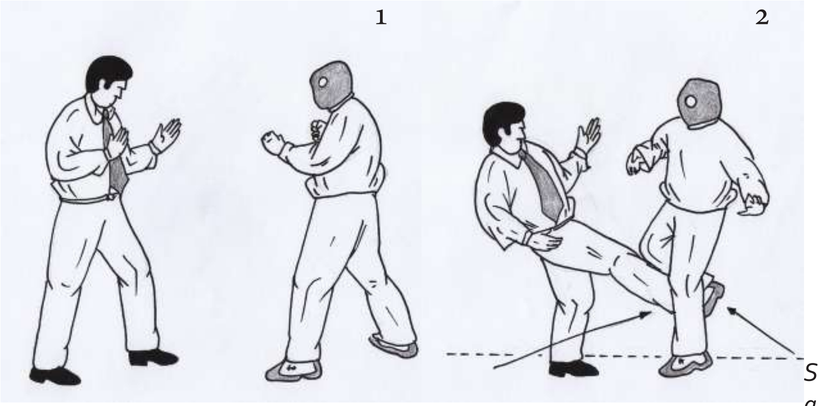
Kicks by relatively untrained assailants are usually easier to handle than punching attacks, as they come from further away, and they offer opportunities for fierce defenses and counters. The flip side of the coin is that kicking attacks by trained Martial Artists require a more careful approach.
We shall present the selected Krav Maga techniques categorized by the type of Kick, starting with the Front Kick, which is the most common with untrained attackers. Still, do not underestimate any assailant and remember that a kick usually targets your groin, the sensitive target *par excellence*.

4.1 Defenses against Front Kicks

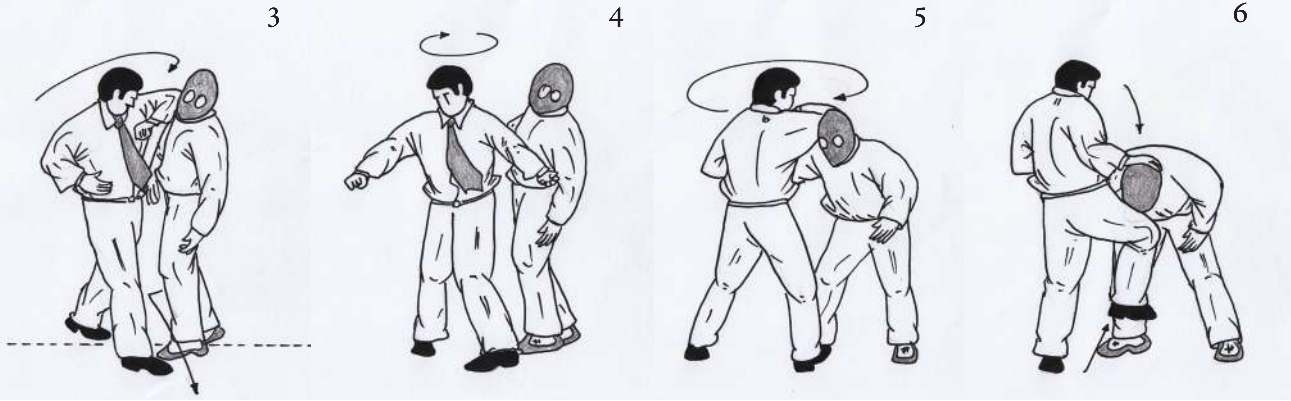
A. *The best way* to handle a Front Kick is, of course, **preemptive**: assault the potential assailant just as he has taken the decision to kick. If you start early enough, any preemptive attack will do. If you are slightly late to the party, then the best approach is to go forward and stop-kick his own kicking leg, preferably with a fast Front Low Soccer Kick to the shin. You can then use your forward momentum for a close-up *Retzev*. Kicking the shin of a leg travelling towards you is very effective: it is psychologically disturbing, it foils all of the opponent's plans and distance calculations, and it adds the energy of *his* kick to the impact. If you are wearing hard-soled shoes, all the better.



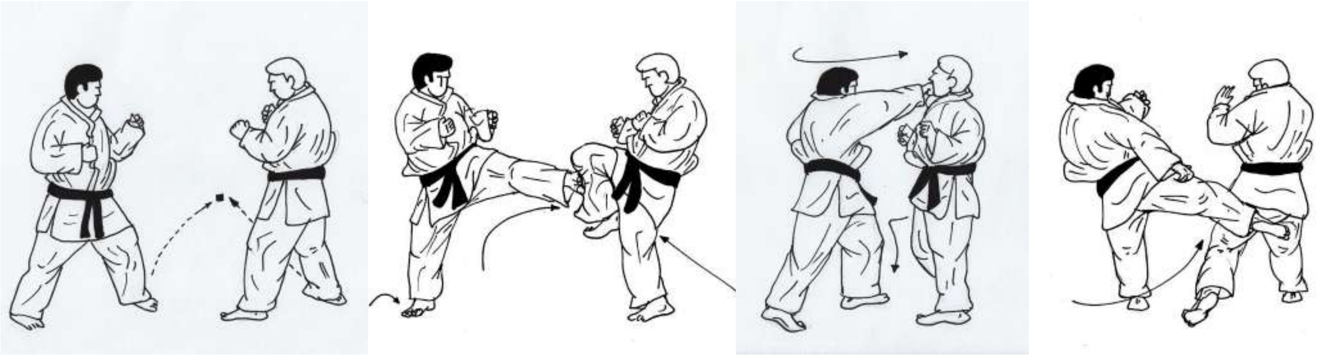
Stop Kick to the shin of the opponent's kicking leg in development



Stop-kick the incoming Front Kick and start your Retzev

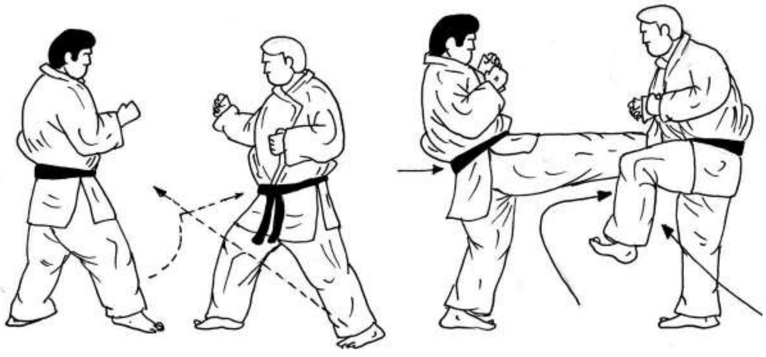


The principle of kicking the shin of a developing Front Kick stays the same if you use a *Low Side Stop Kick*, as illustrated below.



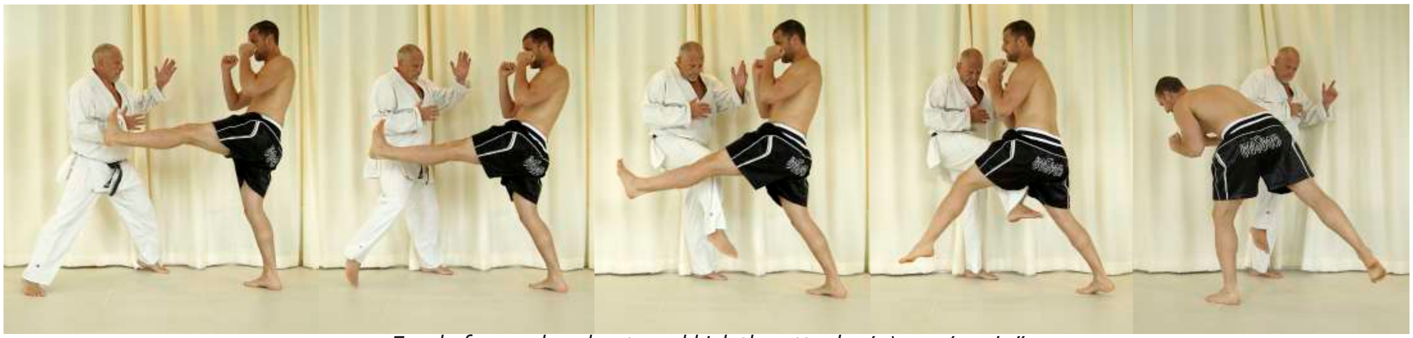
Side Stop Kick to the shin of an incoming Front Kick

Of course, if you have the time and necessary speed, you could directly attack his groin as he starts his Front Kick. This is usually a front-leg Upward Front Groin Kick. This is not far-fetched at all, as you 'feel' his attack coming, and as your opponent counts on you staying in place (or retreating) and develops his kick accordingly.



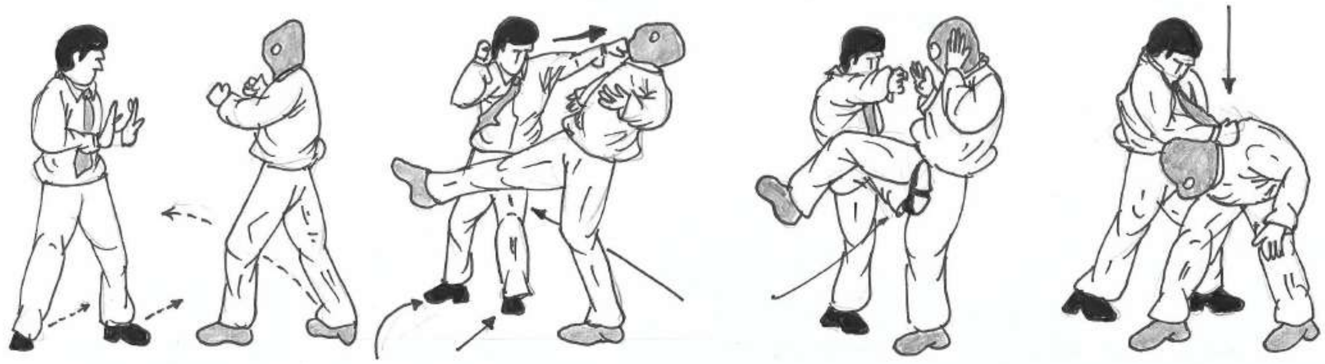
Go for his testicles with your own Front Kick, as soon as you discern his attack

B. *The most elegant way* to deal with a Front kick is **to evade and then counter fast**, preferably while the kick is still being executed. The best example is the Forward Diagonal Evasion with a Groin Kick while the attacker's leg is still in the air. The technique is very simple, extremely effective, but requires drilling and flawless timing!



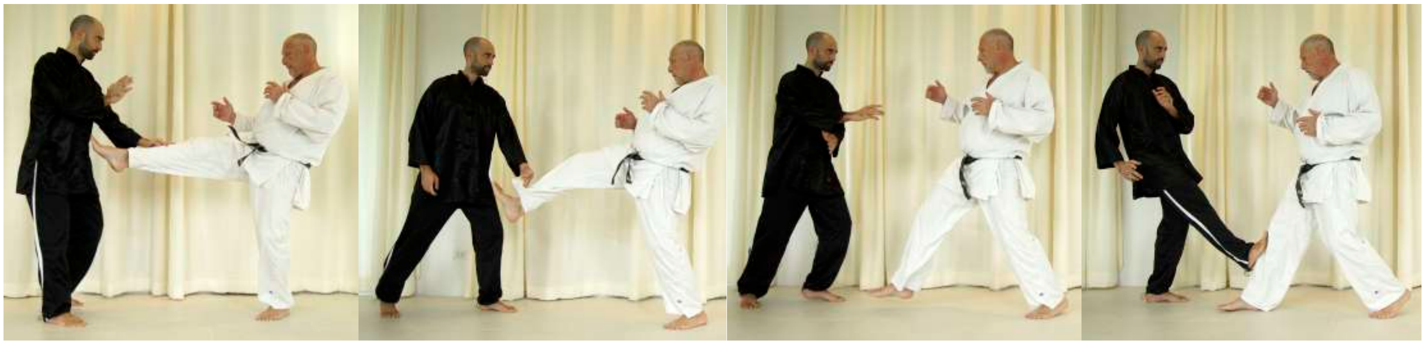
Evade forward and out, and kick the attacker's 'open' groin"

The evading Stop Strike needs not be necessarily a Kick. In the Illustrations below, we show an evasion to the outside of the kicking leg, with a *simultaneous Punch to the face* (chin or nose). The impact is very strong because of the forward momentum of the attacker. You can then kick his groin from behind, before his kicking foot lands and conclude with a Forearm Strike to the back of his exposed neck.



Evading Punch against a committed Front Kick attack, and follow-up

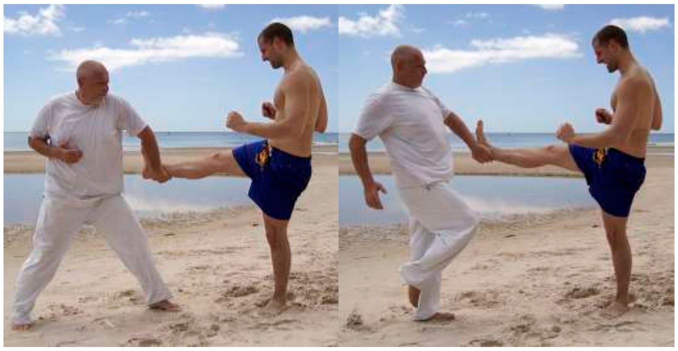
Of course, the evasion can also be *rearwards*, out of range. Such an evasion, is usually done with some form of control of the incoming kick. In the example illustrated by the Photos at the top of next page, you retreat just enough to keep out of range of the kick; and then, you attack the knee of the landing leg. Kick *through the knee*, *in a stomping movement*, and start your *Retzev* (by starting with a high Strike).



Evade rearwards with some control of the attacking kick, and attack the landing knee with a powerful Low Front kick

C. *The defenses left to cover are the more classic '**Block & Counter**'*. Generally, the blocking is more of a 'deviating' maneuver that takes the momentum of the kick and takes it enough of course to neutralize the danger. To use your arms to block a kick head to head with brute force is not a very intelligent approach: the legs are much stronger and you will end up hurting your hands or forearms.

Our first example will be the 'blocking' version of the previous forward-evading technique with *Groin Kick*. In this case, you have evaded rearwards while blocking down outwards. You can scoop and grab the kicking ankle if you can; or you can just block and kick. If you have scooped the ankle you can also pull the leg forward to place the opponent slightly off-balance and keep him in the air longer. But the simple *Block and Kick* technique is certainly easier and effective enough. In the Photos below, we illustrate the scooping block, but with no pulling the attacker forward. As soon as the blocking deviation is achieved and you are out of danger, your Groin Kick is on its way.



Evade back with controlling block and kick the attacker's open groin

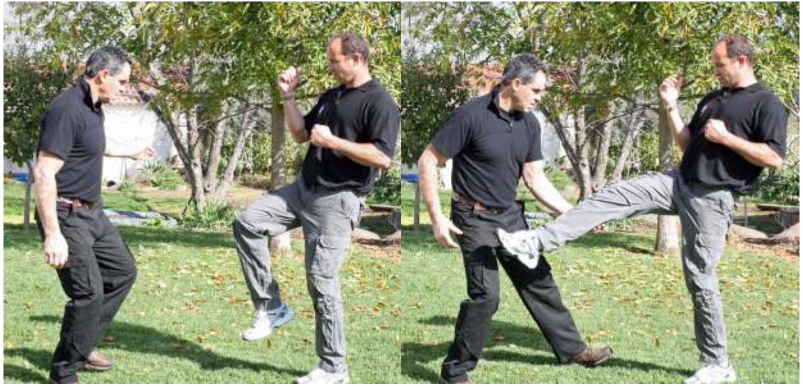
3

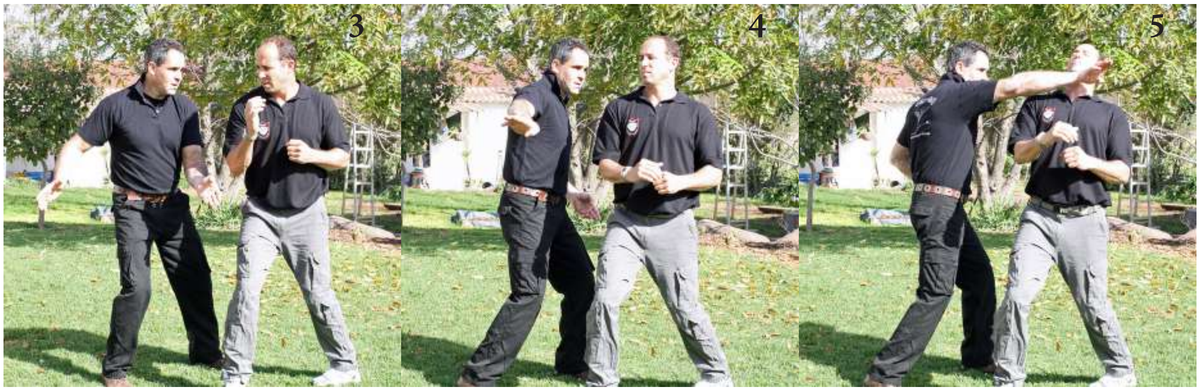
4

5

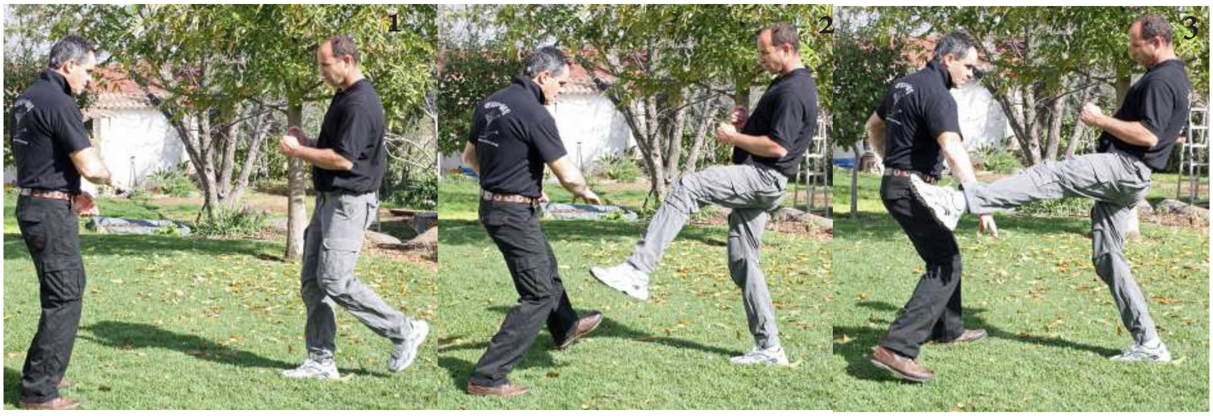
6

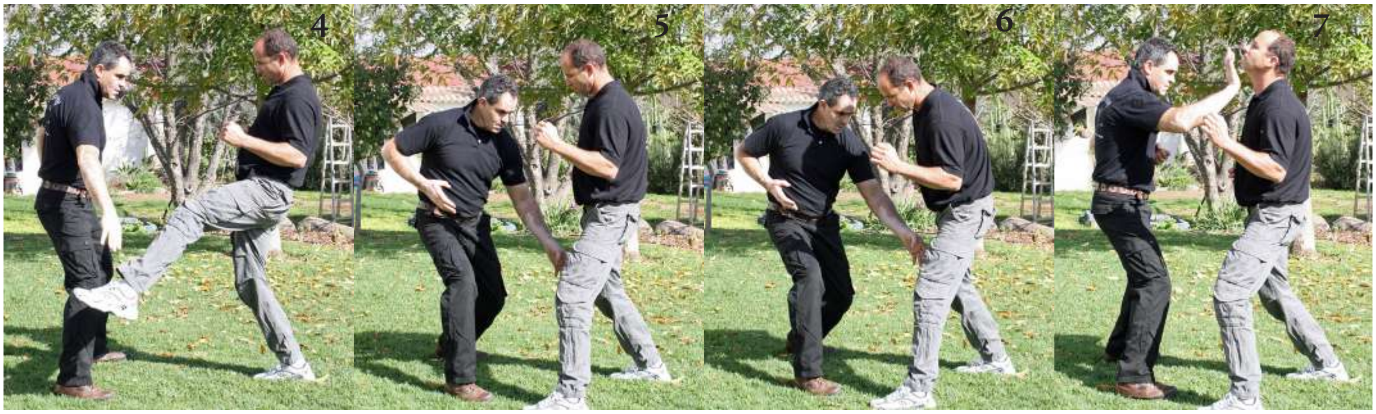
When you block a Front Kick and block with a lateral evasion, you can either evade to the *inside* of the kicking assailant, or to the *outside*. You block to inflect the course of the kick while going *diagonally forward* just enough to be outside of the direct vector of the kick development. In the spirit of *Krav Maga*, you should then start your counter as early as possible.



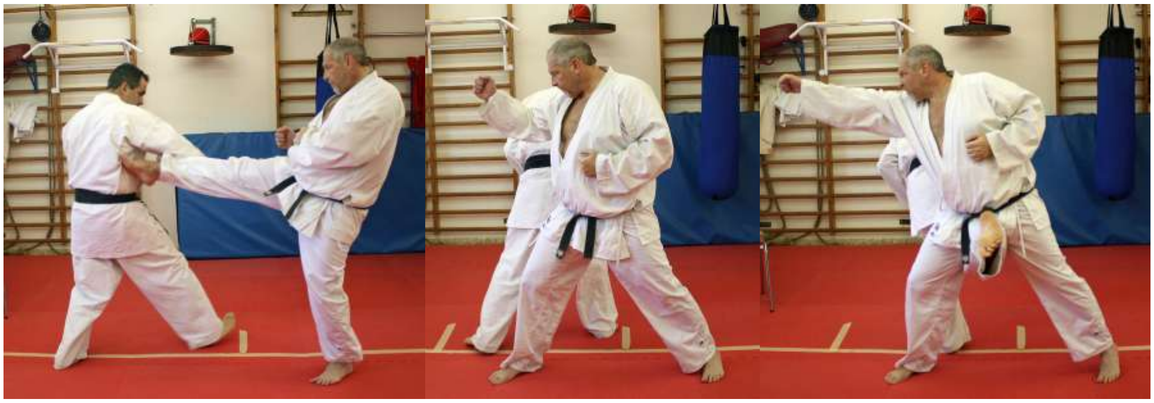


Evade **outside** *the kicking leg and counter with a Ridge-hand Throat Strike as he lands forward*





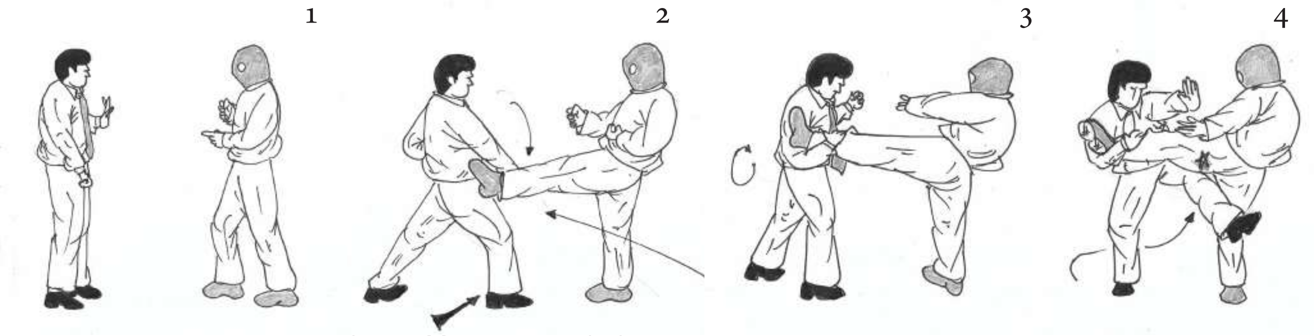
Evade **inside** *the kicking leg and start your Retzev with a Groin Strike and a Palm attack of his face*



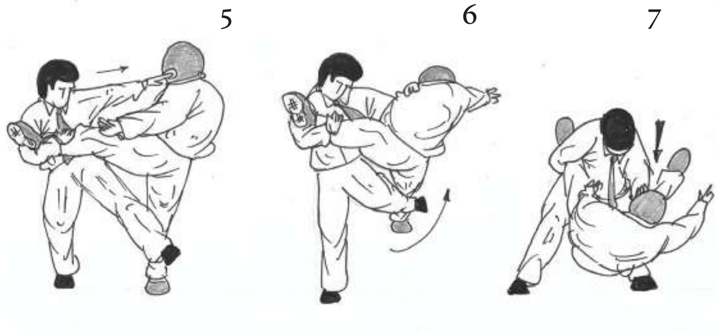
Another example of follow-up after an evasion block ***outside*** *the kicking leg*

One of the most stunning technique against a Front Kick (and a Roundhouse) is the **Big Inner Reap Takedown**, coming for Ju Jitsu's *O Uchi Gari*. This Takedown can be executed after you have blocked and scooped the attacking leg, and it then becomes a *very stunning and dangerous maneuver*: done mildly it will at least stun your opponent and take his breath out; done by lifting him as high as possible and then pushing his head down first it can be lethal.

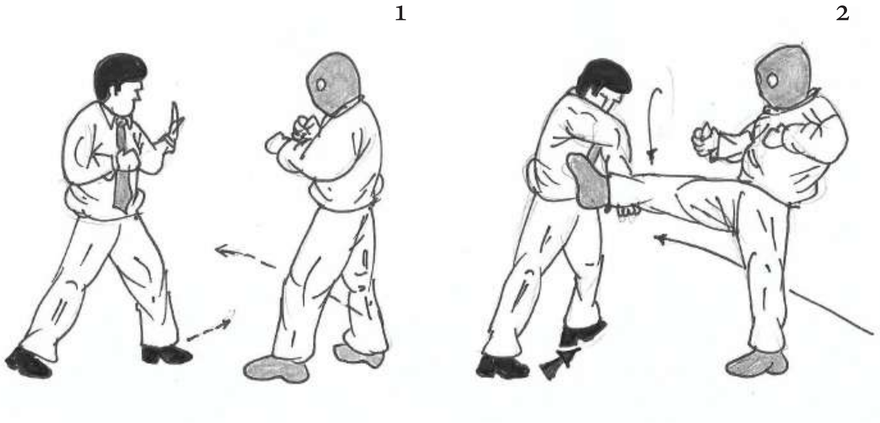
The first example below shows an evading-forward scooping Block to the inside of the kicking leg. Once you have grabbed the leg, knee the opponent's groin, poke or whip his eyes, and then grab him for the reaping Takedown. If the confrontation is serious push his head down as he falls. If it is not enough, note that you are holding his opened legs and that you can punch his groin fast before releasing them.



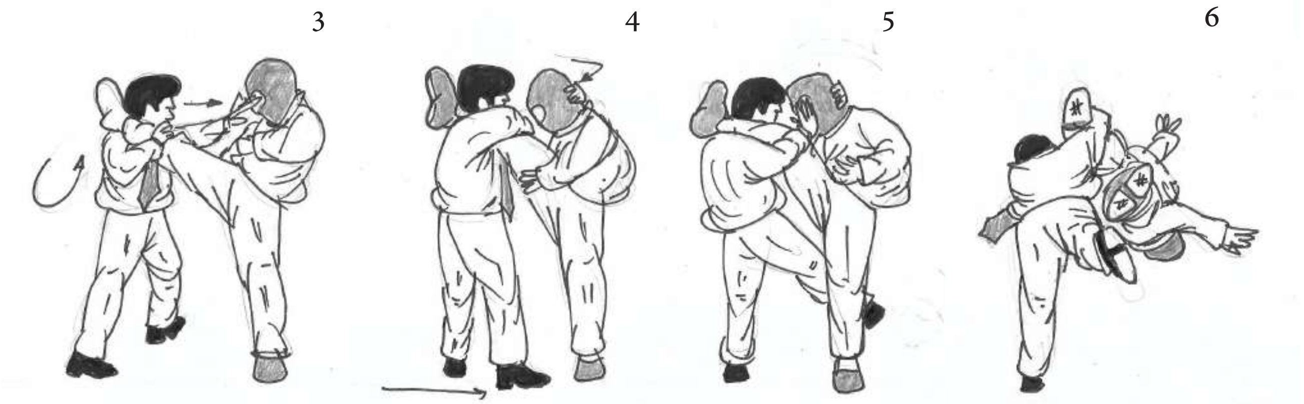
Evading ***Inside*** *Scooping Block to dangerous Takedown*



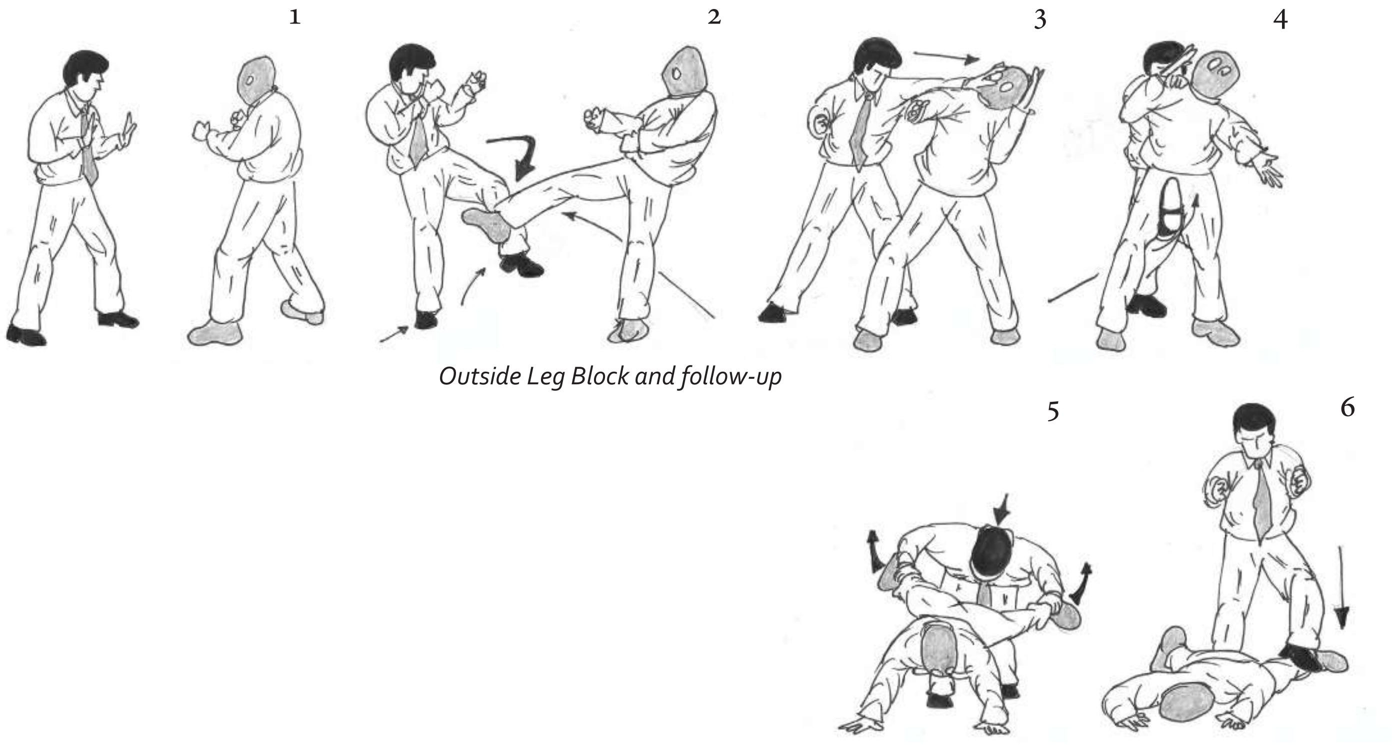
This coming second set of Drawings illustrates the same technique following an *Outside* Scooping Block of his Front Kick Attack. Once the leg grabbed and lifted, you whip or poke his eyes to get safely closer, then take hold of the back of his head. Palm-strike his face (your other hand keeps his head in place) and then push it down towards the floor while reaping off his standing leg. If he falls on his back, he will be seriously rattled, somewhat hurt and breathing with difficulty. If he falls on his head, he will be veryseriously hurt. Be careful and rational!



Evading **Outside** *Block to dangerous Takedown*



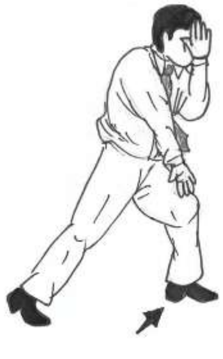
D. *The last general defense tactic to mention is the Leg Block.* Instead of deviating the kick with your hands, you will do so with your lower leg. The **Leg Block** is very simple, but it requires familiarization and some training to master it enough for intuitive use. But the important advantage of this kind of block is that you do not need to bend forward or to open your guard: you stay in guard and block, then counter. The Illustrations at the top of next page show how to slightly move out of the center-line, in order to leg-block the incoming Front Kick on the *outside*. Counter with a Palm Strike to the face as you lower the blocking leg. As your deviating block has caused the attacker to land with his back to you, you should follow up immediately with an Upward Front kick to the groin from behind. As the opponent crouches in pain, you are in the ideal position for painful takedown: grab his ankles and pull them up while head-butting his lower back. As he fells on his face, you can stomp one of his ankles to make sure he will not have the ability to keep aggressing you.



Outside Leg Block and follow-up

4.2 Defenses against Roundhouse Kicks

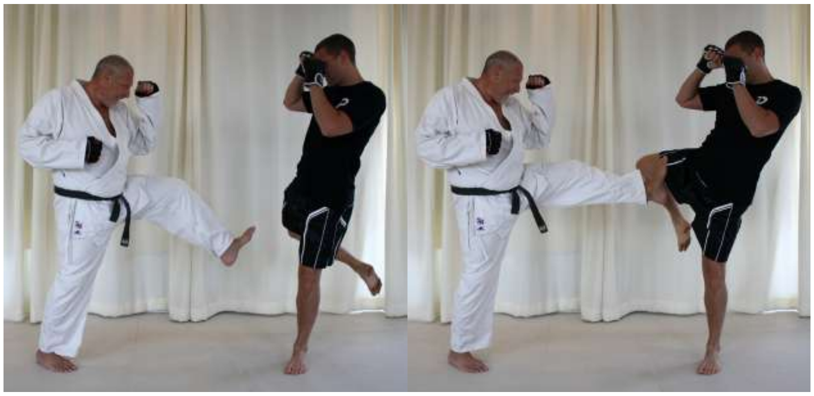
Defenses against Roundhouse Kicks are based on the same principles of the defenses against the Front Kick previously discussed. The principles stay the same, but with the necessary adaptations. We will cover a few examples briefly, and the reader will easily make the connection and devise his own preferred techniques.
The only additional principle to take into account is that the safest spot, when attacked with a Circular Kick, *is as close as possible to the axis around which the kick develops*. That means in practice, **close to the opponent**. Diving *to the inside* of an attacker in the midst of developing a Roundhouse is a very simple and effective tactic.
If you have come late to the party, and if the kick is already well on its way, the way to block a Roundhouse is illustrated below. This arms set-up is the best possible, because the height at which a Roundhouse connects is easily modified until the last seconds before impact. On top of that, this arms configuration allows for an easy scooping of the kicking leg for the fierce follow-ups that we shall present.



Multipurpose Blocking configuration to deal with Roundhouse Kicks

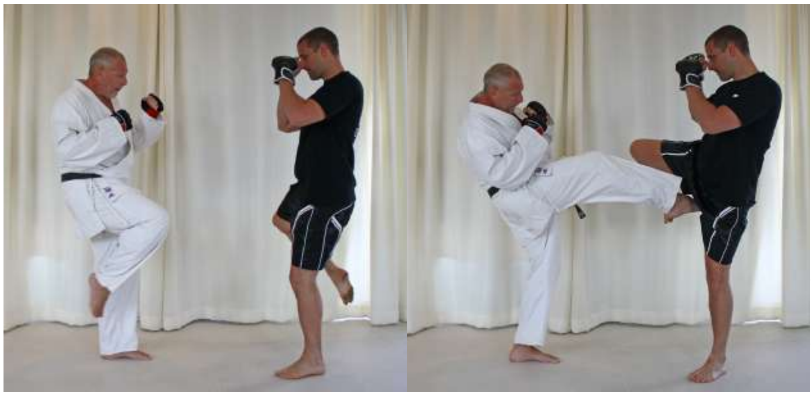
A. Preemptive

The coming Photos illustrate a *Preemptive Front Pushing Kick* to the thigh of the developing Roundhouse kick. Of course, following up is required.



Stop Kick to the incoming leg

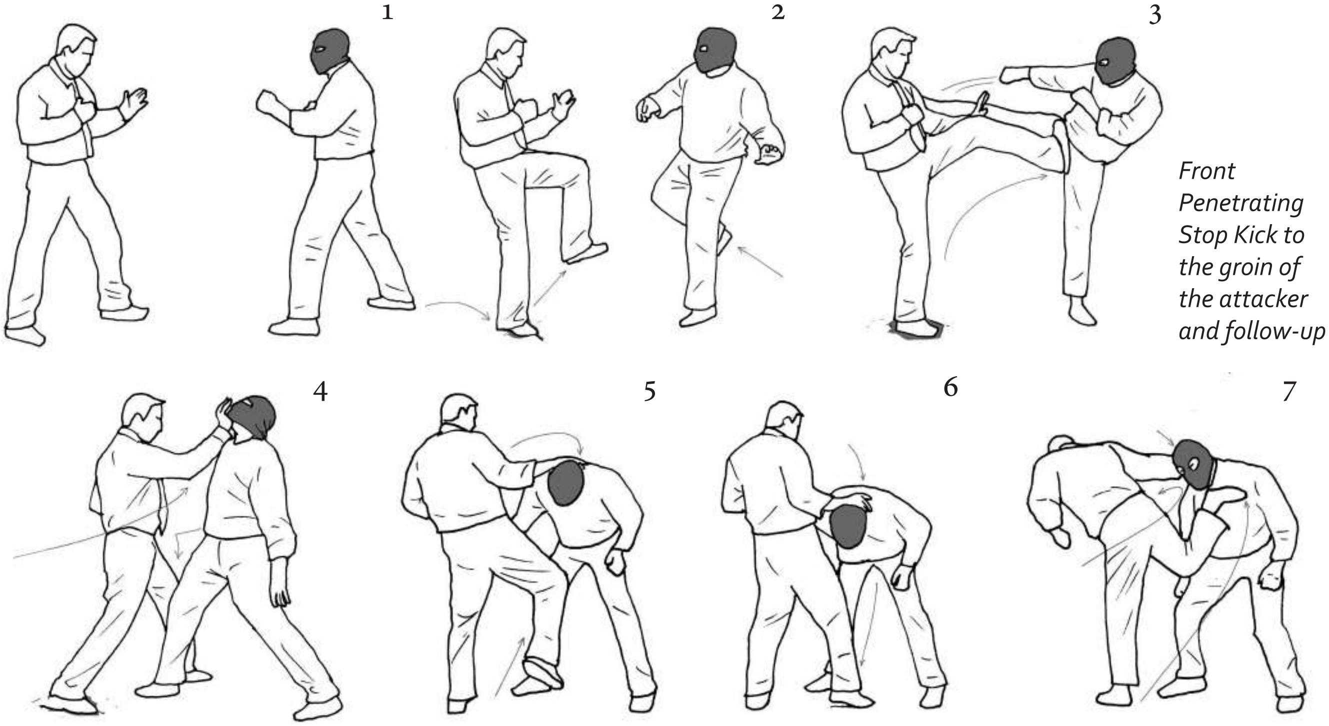
A much more pitiless 'Krav Maga' approach, would be to stop-kick with a *Preemptive Upward Front Kick to the exposed groin* of the attacker. Your kick is fast and direct; his is circular and more cumbersome. See the Photos.



Kick the groin of the attacker before he can fully develop his Roundhouse; follow up

The downside of the previous elegant technique is that, should you miss the groin, you have not stopped anything and are vulnerable. The best alternative option if you are not yet sure of yourself enough, would be to kick his groin, but with a powerful Pushing or Penetrating Front Kick. The idea is to both to stop him by kicking near his center of gravity, and to shock him in the groin area with a reverberating hit. So, as illustrated in the Drawings at the top of next page, you execute a straight Front Kick towards his groin and connect with the heel or the sole of your shoe. Follow up with a Palm Strike to the face or chin, a grab of his head, a Knee Strike to the groin and an Uppercut Back Kick to his face as he crouches from pain (and is maintained there by your hand).

➔



Front Penetrating Stop Kick to the groin of the attacker and follow-up

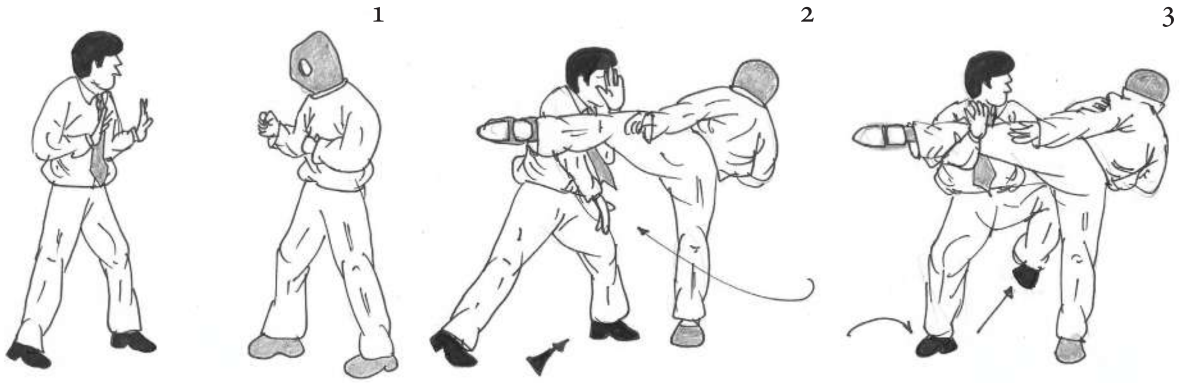
B. Evade/Block and Counter

The principles for *countering after evading and/or blocking* stay the same as for the Front Kick studied above. Just remember that the safe evasion against a Roundhouse is diagonally forward to the inside of the kicking leg, and that the closer you'll be to the attacker's kicking axis, the safer.

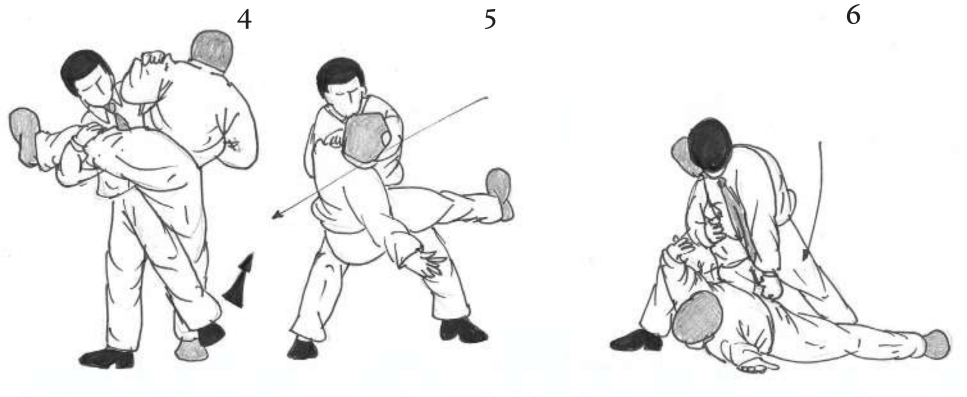
You could just hop there and punch, but it is safer to block, or at least take the covered position described at the beginning of the section. But from there, any counter goes, as the opponent is in a very vulnerable position.

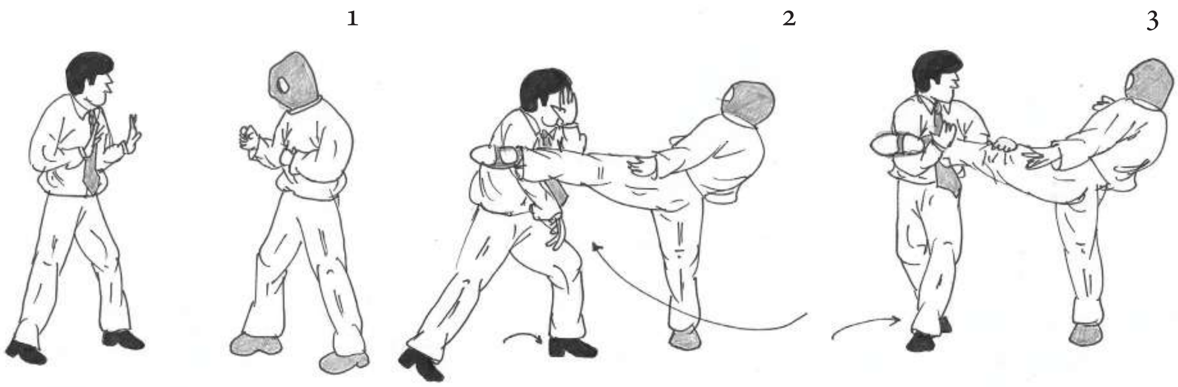
We shall just present the use of the very punishing **Reaping Takedowns**, as counters. Just like with the front Kick, it is the best way to follow up, as the fall is very harsh for the opponent if you execute the Takedown aggressively: lift legs high and push upper body down. The coming sets of Illustrations, on the next page, are self-explanatory.

➡

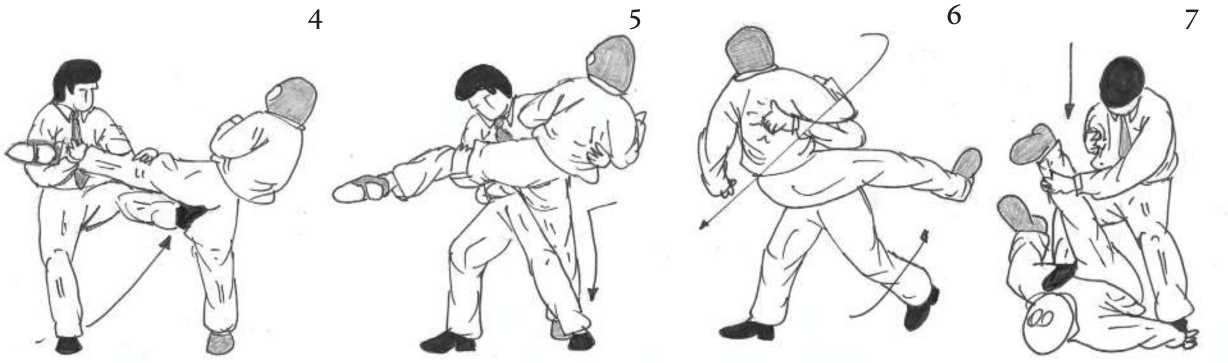


Evade and 'Block' the Roundhouse attack, knee the groin, reap his standing leg, throw his upper body towards the floor and punch his exposed groin



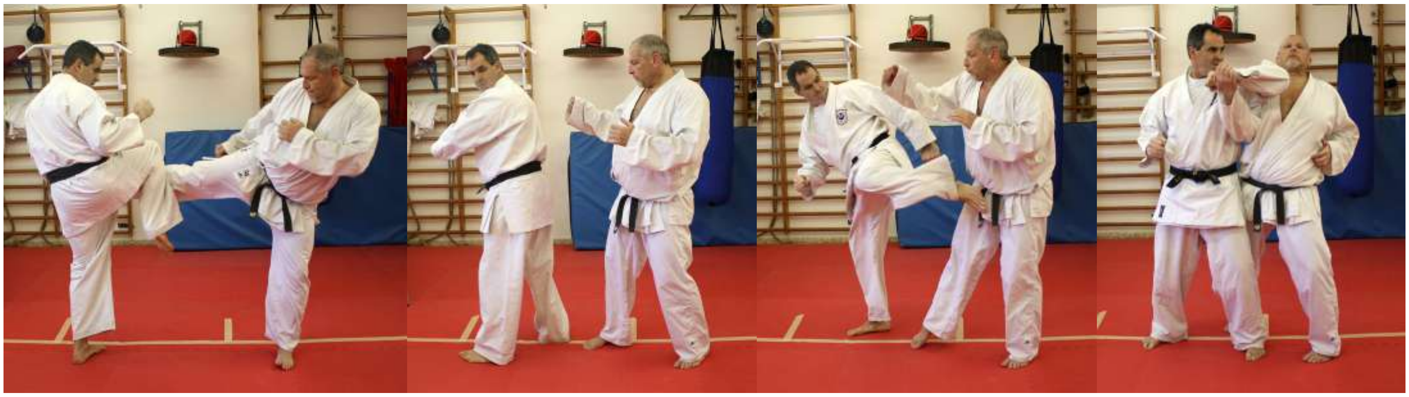


Slightly different variation: Evade and 'Block', deliver a Front-leg Upward Side Kick to the groin, reap while twisting (Harai Goshi style), and stomp the exposed groin



C. Leg Block

The Leg Block is also effective against Roundhouses targeting the mid-body or lower. It is also a good tactic if you are late at dealing with the incoming kick. The Photos below illustrate such a *Leg Block*, followed by a Spin-back short Back Kick to the groin and an Elbow Strike to the face (face on its way down from the pain of the testicles). Keep the *Retzev* going as long as necessary. Spin-backs are not very common in *Krav Maga*, because there is usually a safer alternative; but in this case. The Leg Block has an inherent twisting momentum that is best used for a fast spin.



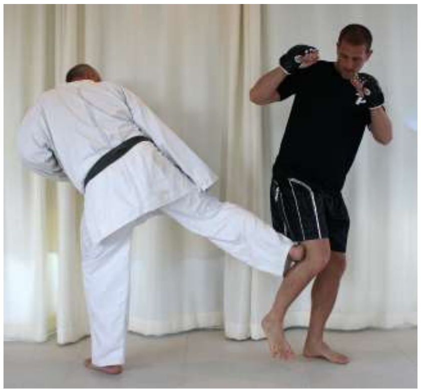
Leg Block against a mid-level Roundhouse, with a Spin-back counter

4.3 Defenses against Side Kicks

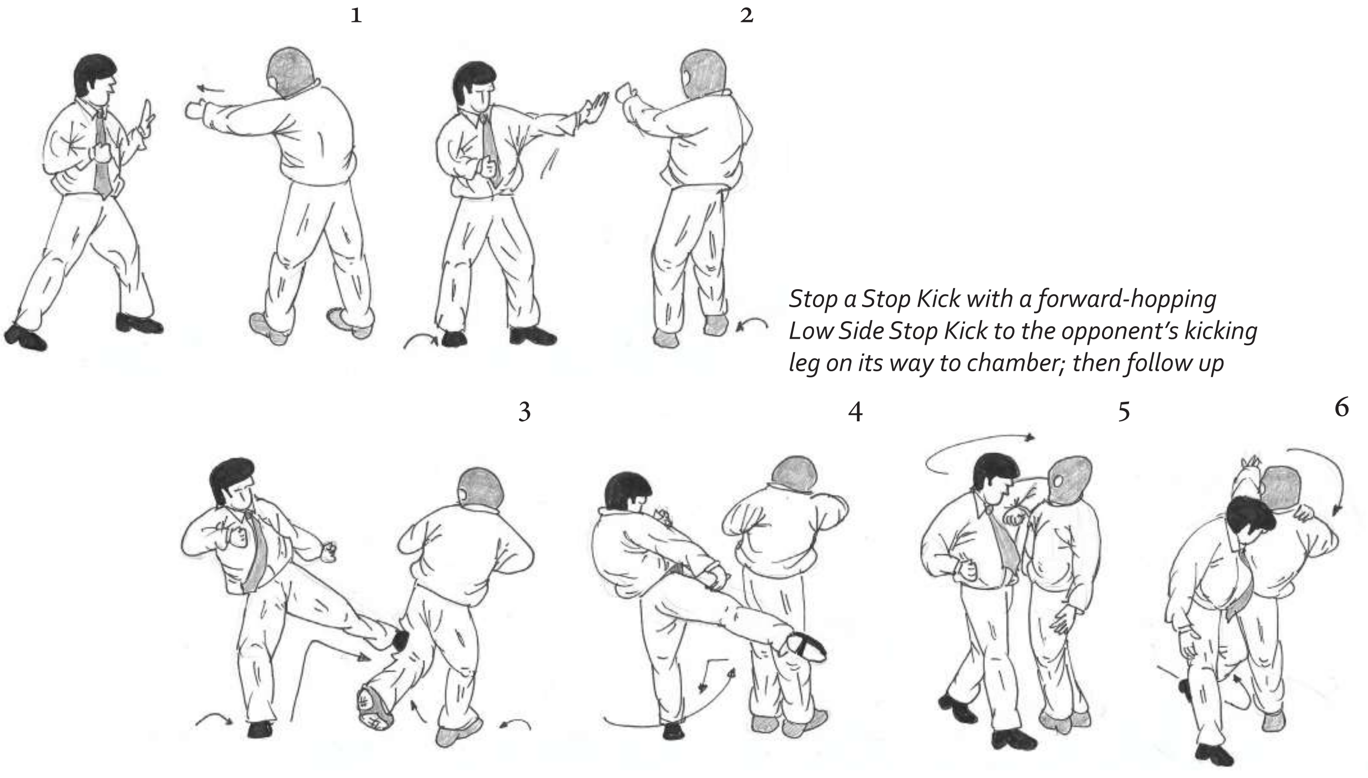
The reader is now familiar with the general principles of defending against kicking attacks. ***Dealing with Side Kicks*** is based on the same principles and the trainee will fast realize that. Side Kicks are usually executed from the front leg, with a step or a hop. But Side Kicks are a little particular in that they are usually easier to spot early because the preparatory stance is sideways and the chambering is quite specific. Dealing with the Side Kick can also easily lead to 'owning' the opponent's back. But, it should also be remembered that a successful Side Kick is one of the most powerful strikes possible, in terms of energy delivered. Caution then!
We shall now present a few defenses, with no special emphasis on the classification.

The most effective way to deal with the Side Kick will be, of course, ***preemptively*** with a *Stop Kick*.

The first set of Illustrations show a '***Stop-the-kick***' approach, in which you use your own Side Kick to strike its chambering leg. A front-leg Side Kick will generally be executed from a Side Stance, after a high hand feint that covers a forward hop. You will foil the attacker's plans by reacting to the high feint to boost his confidence, but then hopping yourself fast forward to for a *Low Side Stop Kick into his legs*. The opponent does not expect you to go forward and will be still in his development for a 'long' kick. Aim for the knee, like in the Photo and the Drawings, and then follow-up immediately: a rear-leg powerful Low Kick to the knee, a hip-driven Circular Elbow Strike to the face, and an Outer Reap Takedown. And keep at it, if necessary, by stomping his ankles and/or elbows.

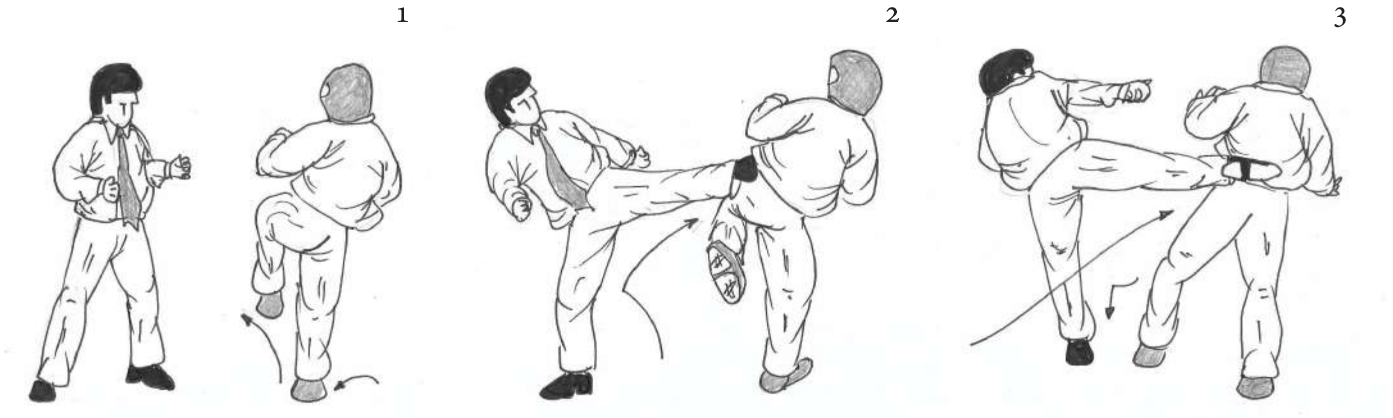


Stop the Kick by blocking his chambering leg



Stop a Stop Kick with a forward-hopping Low Side Stop Kick to the opponent's kicking leg on its way to chamber; then follow up

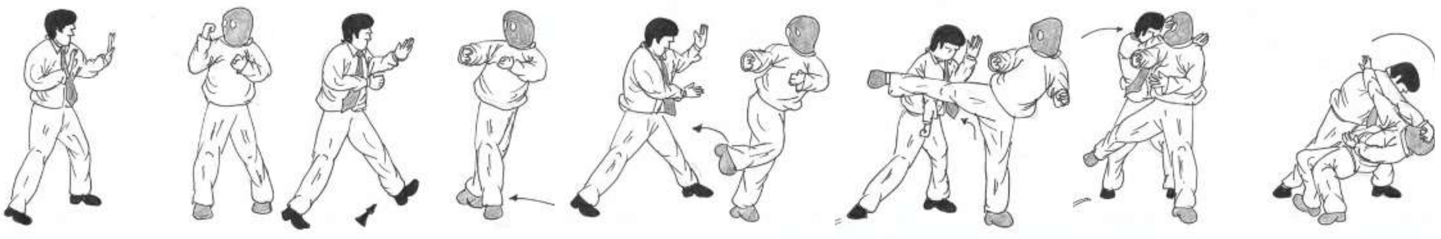
If you are slightly late, or if you feel more comfortable, you can also stop-kick him ***at the hip*** to interrupt his momentum and to prevent him to be able to extend the kick. See Drawings below. You can in fact aim grossly towards the place of the chambered knee: if you get the knee, fine; if you miss the knee you stop him at the hip, fine too. In both cases, the attackers will be put off-balance rearwards. You can follow up with a long rear-leg powerful kick-through Roundhouse Kick towards his kidneys (lower back). From then on, start your *Retzev*.



Stop-kick the hip of an assailant hopping forward for a Side Kick attack

The second-best way to deal with the Side kick is the ***Forward Evasion***, usually with some form of blocking/controlling/covering. As mentioned, it is more advantageous to go for the *outside* of the kicking leg, which will drive him to present his back, and therefore his blind side. It is not always possible but should be strived for.

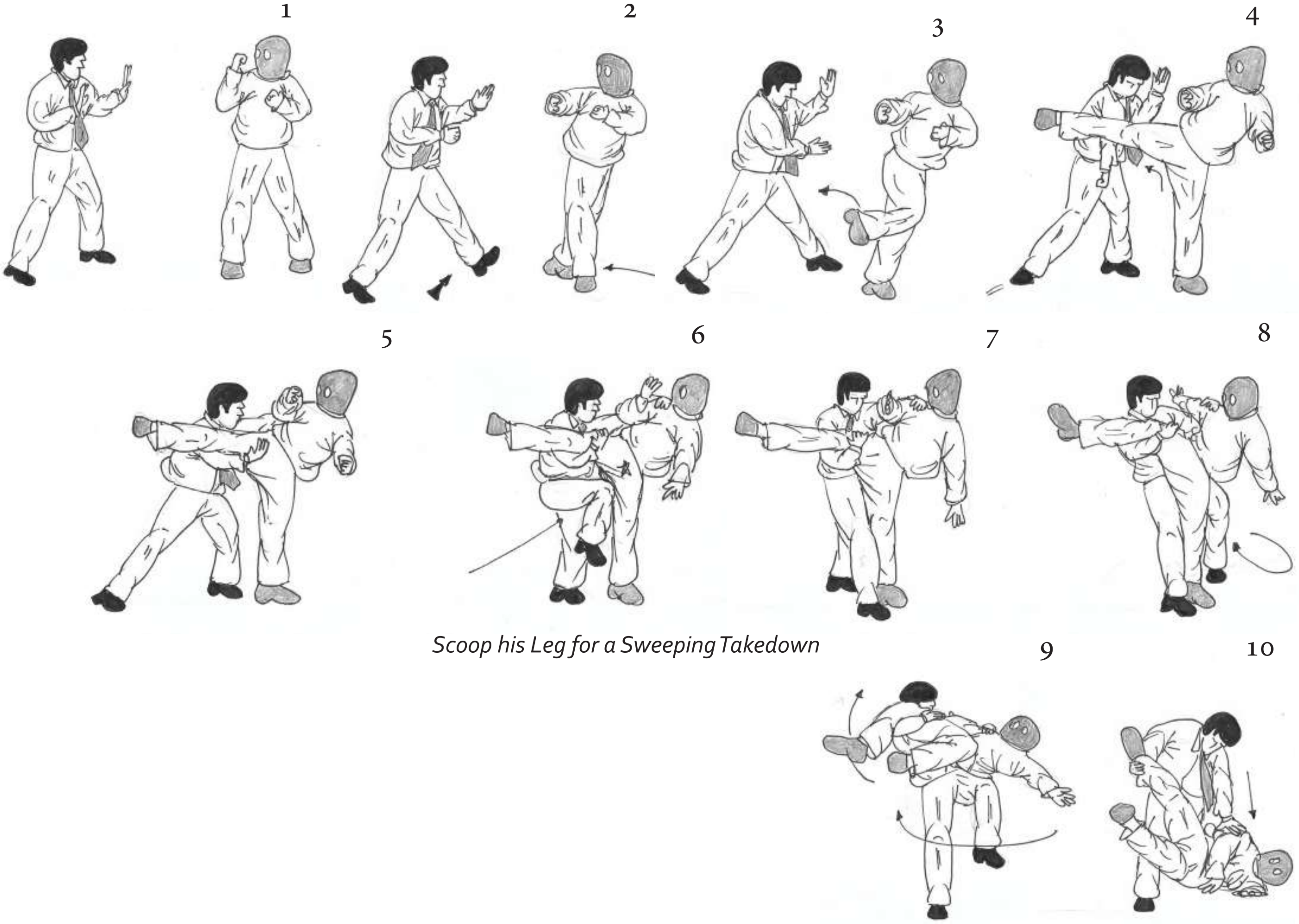
The Illustrations, at the top of next page, show how to step deep *forward and out*, while covering yourself in an arm set-up identical to the general Roundhouse Defense. This is for added security. The follow-up presented is a simple Head-pushing Takedown: grab him, even before his kicking foot lands, and strike his nose with you Palm. Keep your hand on his face, fingers in the general eyes area, and tilt his head back to push it directly down towards the floor. In a serious confrontation the push is brusque and violent; and you also go all the way to slam his head into the floor. ***Extreme caution is warranted in training: go slowly and with control***.



Evade forward and out, and catch his head for a hard Takedown

The same evading move lends itself to other hard Takedowns, as will be illustrated in the two next sets of Figures. The ***covered forward-and-out Evasion*** is ideal for scooping the kicking leg, just as we saw with the Roundhouse Kick Defenses.

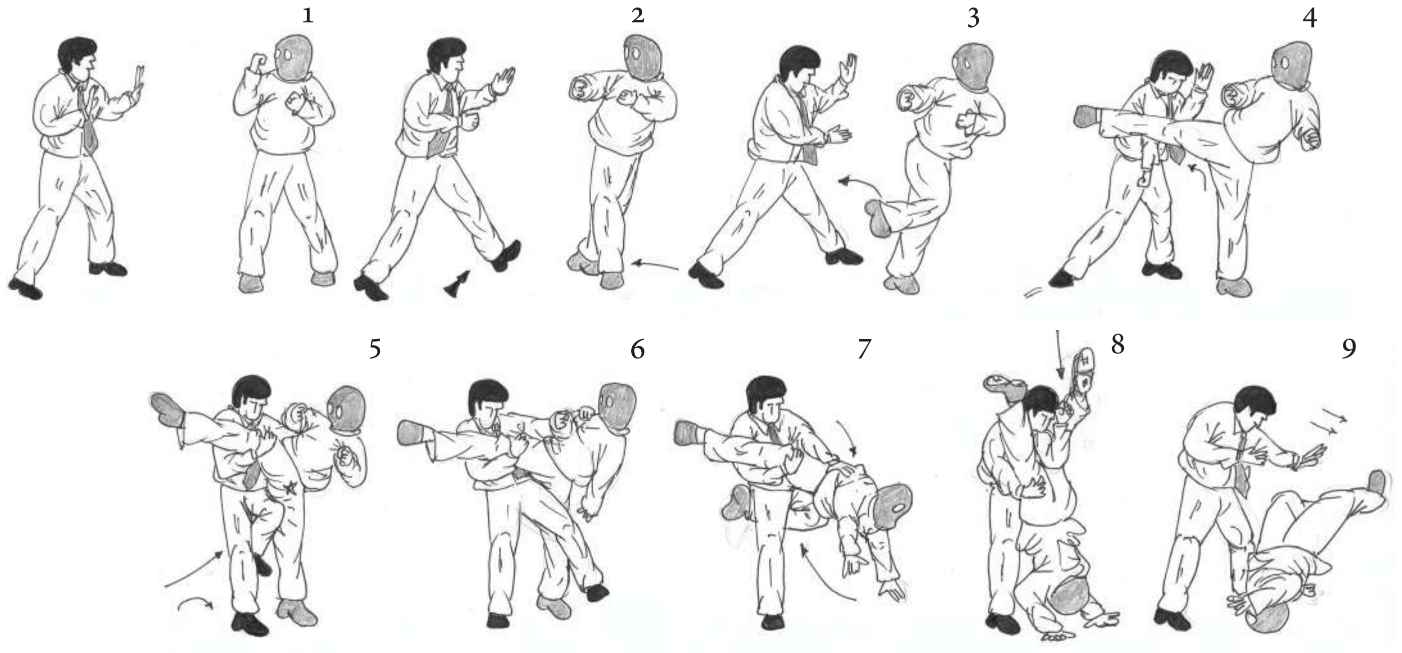
In the first example, you scoop and lift the leg up while delivering a *Knee Strike to the open groin*. Lower the foot for a hip-powered Sweep of the attacker's standing leg. Lift his leg and body *while sweeping him at hip height with your thigh*; the rest of the leg sweeping his thigh. Lift him *as high as possible* and push his body forcefully down during the fall to cause a hard impact. Follow-up by stomping if needed.



Scoop his Leg for a Sweeping Takedown

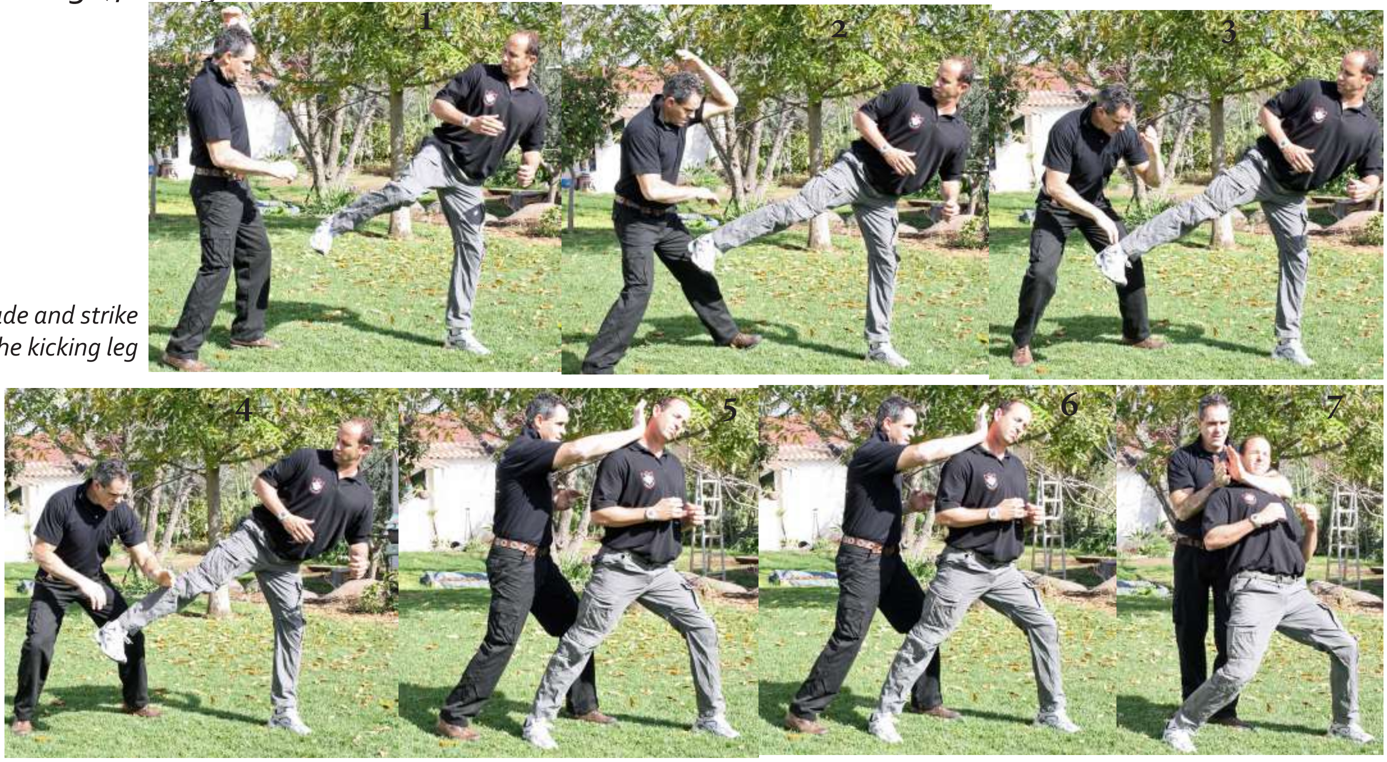
In the same set-up, you could also throw him down with an even harder *Reaping Takedown*. The Drawings at the top of next page illustrate how the Evasion becomes a *Leg Scoop* and then, after the *Groin Knee*, you reap his standing leg to make him fall forward 'on his face'. As he lands in this precarious position, you can still Downward-elbow his groin before pushing his legs forcefully down and away. ***Be very careful in training, this is a very nasty fall.***

➡



Scoop his leg for a Reaping hard Takedown

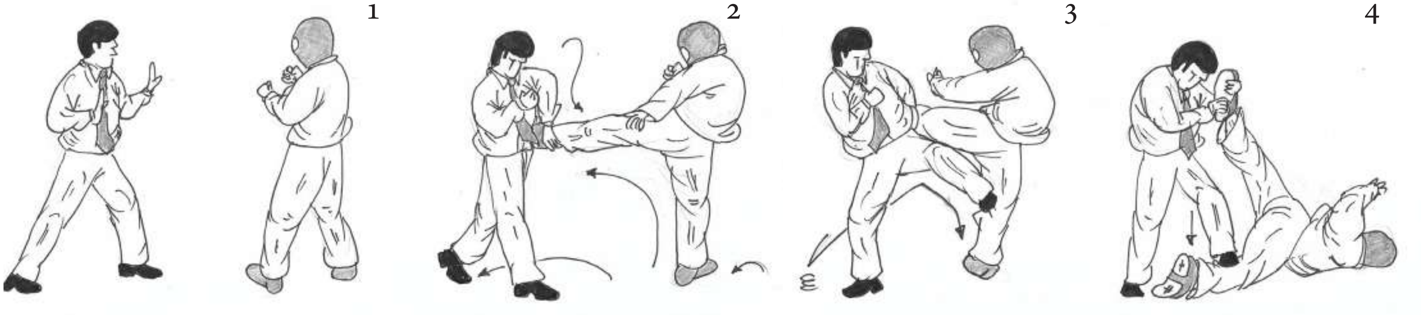
Of course, just to be complete, it should be clear that evading to the *inside*, or evading *without coverage* are also valid *Krav Maga* approaches; they simply require more proficiency and training. In the Photos below, the Side Kick attack is evaded normally to the *Outside*. But, instead of a Block or a Covering move, you strike the attacking knee with a Downward Forearm. This is a painful attack of the knee in kicking extension. Follow-up with a Palm Strike to the side of the head (Ear/Temple/Jaw Hinge), and get him into a Rear Naked Choke.



Evade and strike the kicking leg

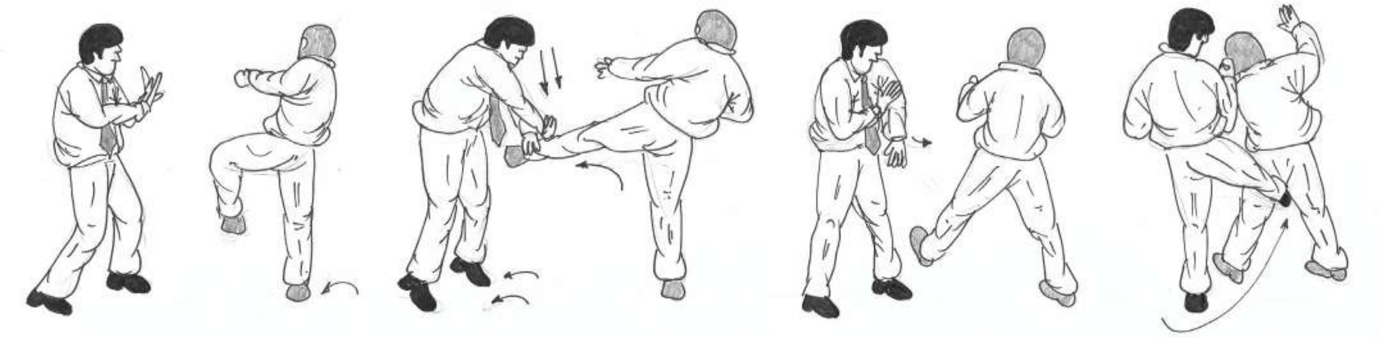
If you have been taken by surprise and can neither stop-kick nor evade forward, you'll have no choice but ***evading rearwards***.

In the first set of Drawings, you see how to step back while pulling your belly back out of range. You 'block' the incoming kick by deviating its trajectory to the opponent's inside. Let your retreating leg rebound on the floor to come back forward immediately, for a Stomping Side Kick into the side/back of the standing knee of the attacker. Kick the knee *into* the ground and grind it there. You should try to scoop the kicking leg at the end of the block, if possible, and keep hold of it. That will place you in much better control when the opponent will reach the floor: you can twist his ankle and/or kick his open groin.



Step back to evade rearwards and scoop the kicking foot before coming back forward with a Knee Stomping Kick

If you are taken even more unawares, then your instinctive reaction would be ***to jump back while pulling the midsection in*** and while *striking down the incoming foot*. Use this natural reaction to do just that, but striking the incoming leg down and *towards the attacker's inside*. Counter immediately with an Upward Front Kick to the opponent's groin, from behind. Follow up!

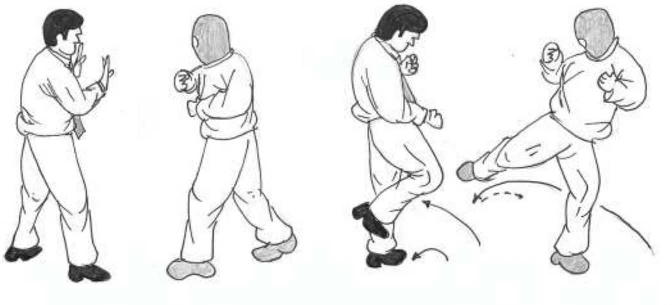


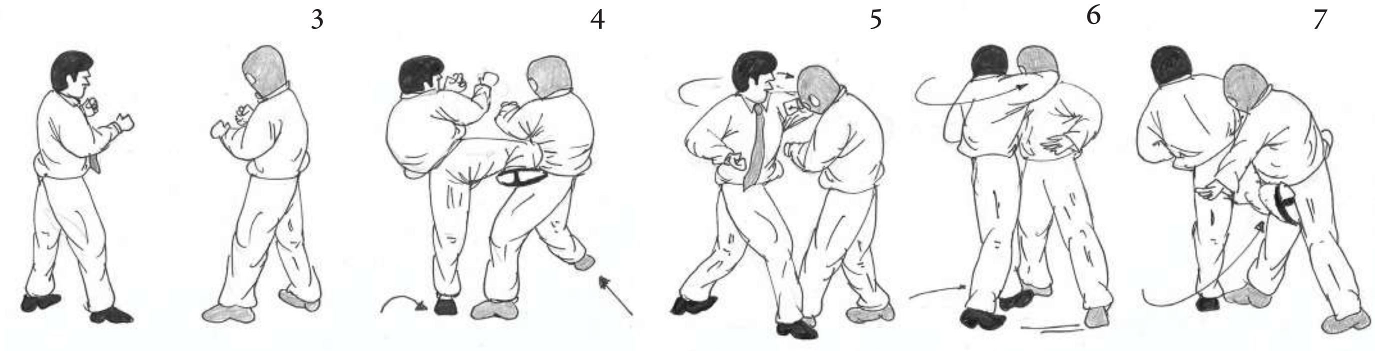
Pull back and strike the kicking foot down and sideways; follow up

4.4 Defenses against Low Kicks

The 'Low Kick' is used a lot in *Krav Maga*, for the simple reason that it is very effective, especially when targeting the knee with precision. It is therefore very important to deal with Low Kick attacks, and there are basically 3 ways to do that: ***preempt***, ***evade*** or ***block***.

1. ***Preemption*** can be an early attack before the Low Kick is in serious development, or it can be an early Stop Kick to the attacking leg. It should be noted that preemption of a Low Kick is pretty difficult because of its inherent speed and short warning window. As illustrated in the first series of drawings, it is easier when your adversary is a 'serial' user of the technique. In this example, you evade rearwards a first Low Kick, and then get ready to *preempt* the next one. As soon as you 'feel' the very beginning of the attack, go forward with your own Shin Front Pushing Kick to the floating ribs. Keep protected and kick, do not push. You can follow up with hip-powered Circular Elbow Strikes to the sides of the head. And finish with a Ghost Kick to the testicles.



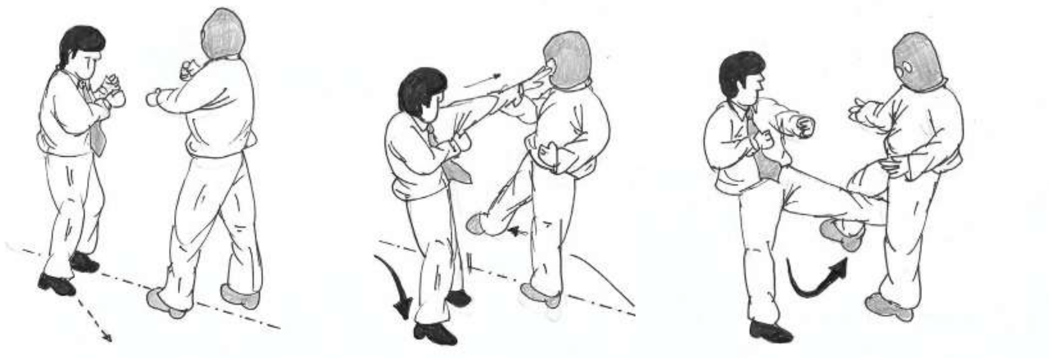


Preempt with an early forward-going Stop Kick

If you are fast and confident, you can also simply *kick towards the opponent's groin* with all you have as early as possible.

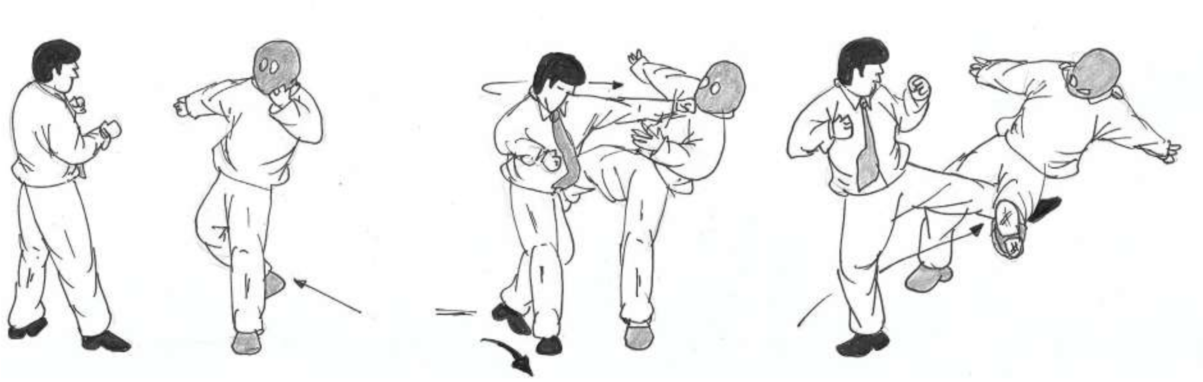
Preemptive Groin Stop Kick as soon as you 'feel' the opponent's decision to attack

Of course, you can also ***stop-punch*** early; it is usually faster, but safety commands some evading. You should go *forward diagonally* to take some distance from the incoming Low Kick. It is pretty easy but requires familiarization and training. In the first set of drawings below, you go diagonally forward against a Low Kick to your inner front knee. Simultaneously poke towards the attacker's eyes and lift your rear foot directly into his groin while his kicking leg is still airborne. Keep at it if necessary.



Attack the opponent's eyes while going diagonally forward and follow up

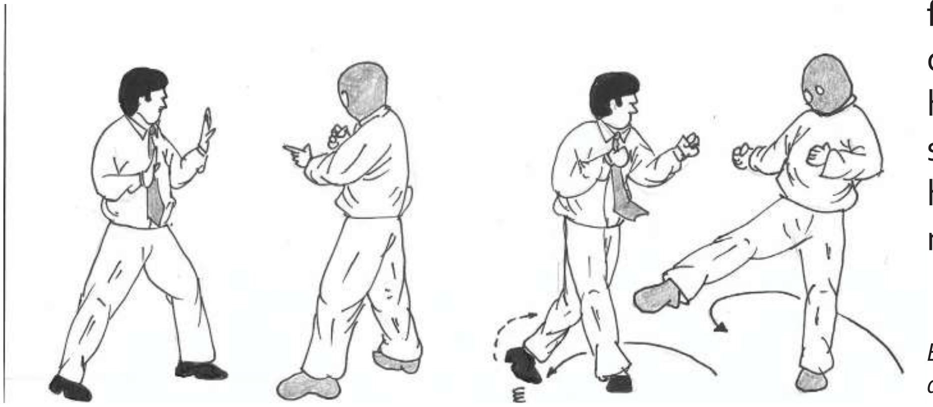
Another example is illustrated in the Figures below. The evasion is identical, but you will punch the chin of the rushing attacker. The following Groin Kick is also more powerful: it is hip powered and aims at kicking through the groin into the upper thigh of the standing leg.



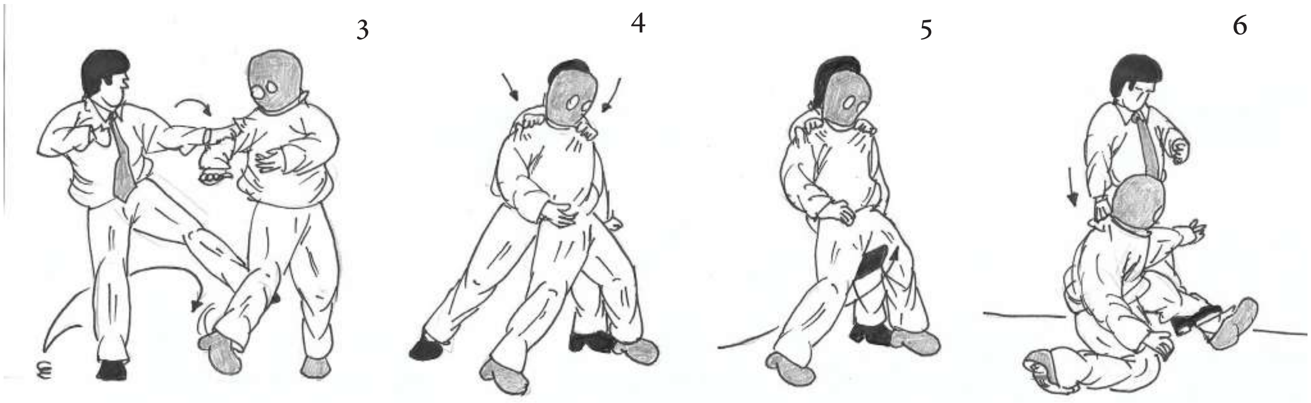
Evade diagonally forward with a Stop Punch and cut-kick through the groin

2. ***Evasion*** *is elegant and natural*: you just pull back the targeted leg. The principle is simple, but it is not always easy to pull the leg fast enough. Training and free-fighting are required. Once you have removed the leg from the kicking trajectory, you should try to make good use of the opponent's momentum and probable (slight) loss of balance.

In the example illustrated below, you pull the targeted leg back to let the Low Kick pass and you let your foot rebound on the floor for a counterattack. You counter by kicking the back knee of the attacking leg, and by doing so you amplify the opponent's momentum. Make sure you target the knee, and not the thigh, for maximum damage. Your well-timed Low Kick will allow you to land deep behind the attacker. Grab his shoulders for a simple Groin Kick from behind and take him down with a naturally-following Kicking Sweep of his rear ankle (pull his opposite shoulder simultaneously). Stomp his ankles, hands or head if necessary.

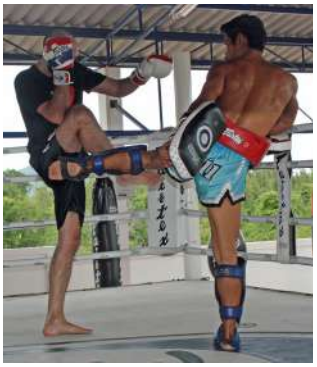


Evade by pulling the targeted leg back and rebound to counter

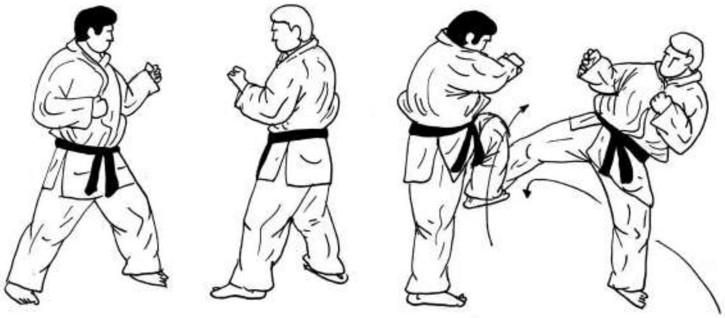


The reader should note that many other counters are possible once the leg has been pulled out of the Low Kick's trajectory; he is invited to try his own 'Retzev'.

3. **Blocking** is *simple, fast and effective*. But it requires some training to make it automatic and to learn to deal with the fact that it can be somewhat painful. You simply lift the leg to block the incoming Low Kick with the fleshier part of the lower leg. A slightly circular movement at the end of the Leg Block helps absorbing the direct hit. It should be noted that this classical *Leg Block* can be executed with the front or the rear leg, and that it is also valid against a mid-body Roundhouse Kick.

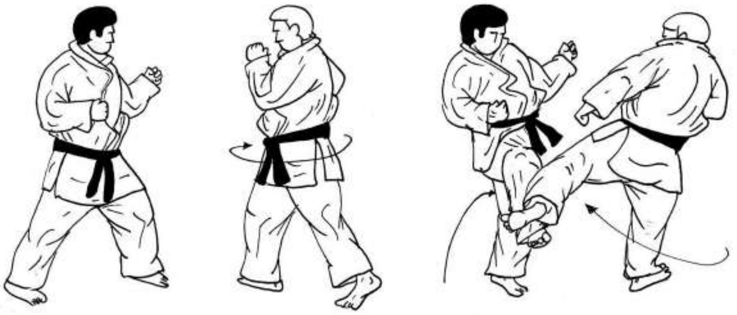


The classic Leg Block



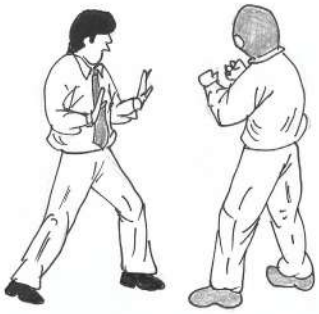
The front-leg Leg Block

The rear-leg Leg Block

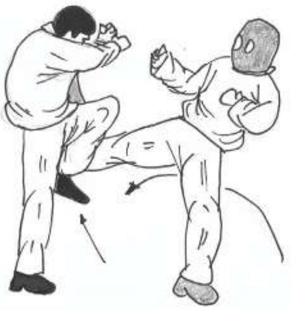


Of course, what is important is what will follow the *Leg Block*. The Illustrations below show how you leg-block the ‘Low Kick’ and immediately counterpunch while landing the blocking foot forward. Your forward momentum is key to the success of this defense. Your mind and body must be in offensive ‘**assault**’ mode (in Hebrew: הסתערות). Follow up with no hesitation: a rear-leg Roundhouse Kick to the groin, completed with a Low Kick of your own to the opponent’s knee joint. Continue if necessary.

1

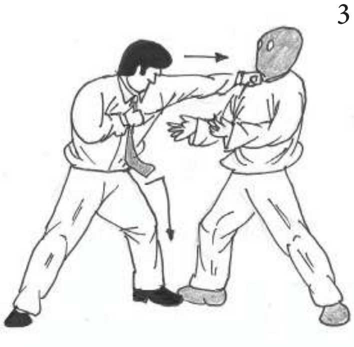


2

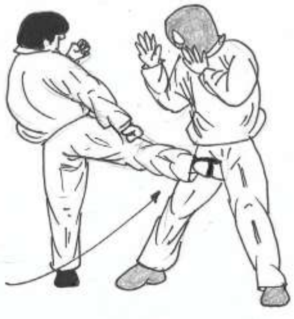


Leg Block with quasi-simultaneous Punch to the throat or chin; and follow-up

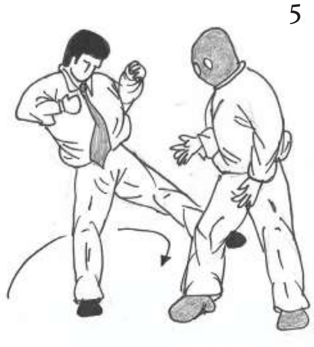
3



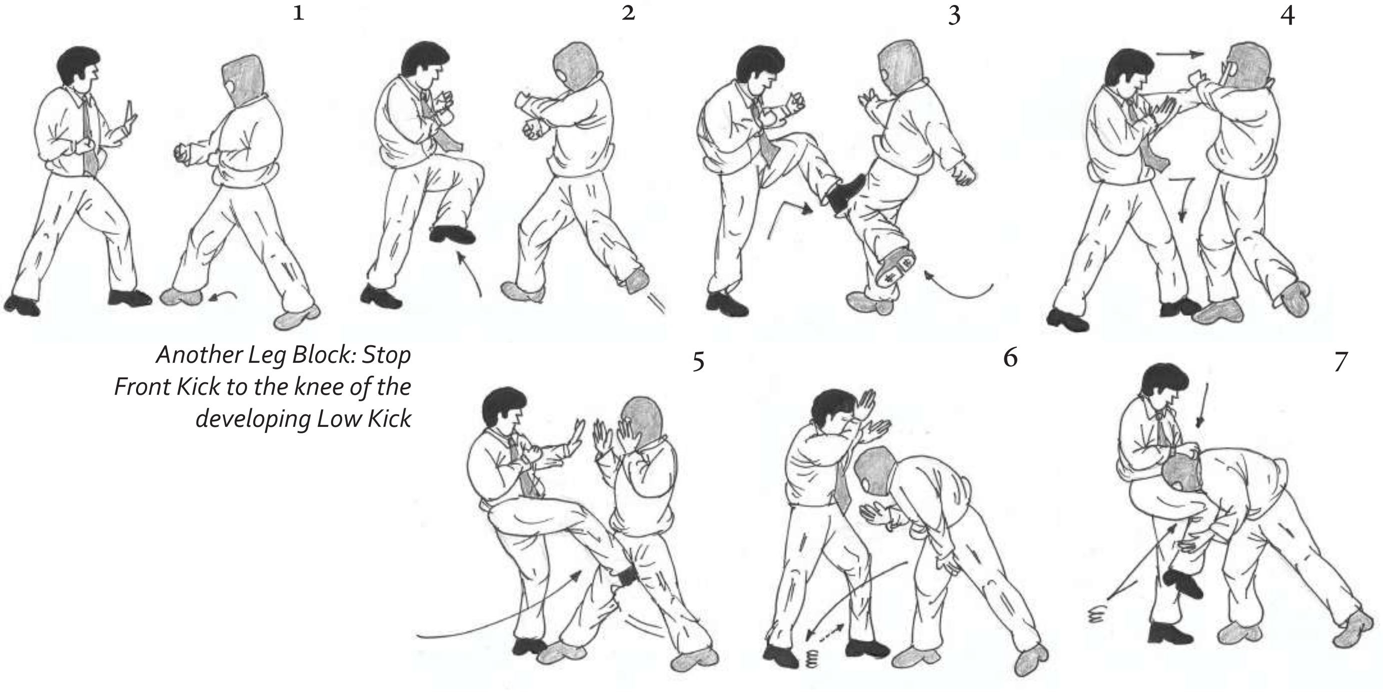
4



5



If you are fast and can stop the Low Kick early, it is even better to ***Stop Kick the incoming leg*** in the initial stages of the attack. This classic Leg Block (of the type: **Stopping-the-leg Stop Kick**) requires more training and experience, but is even more effective than the more 'passive' Leg Block described above.
The Illustrations show how to use a *front-leg Front Pushing Stop Kick* to intercept the knee of the developing Low Kick. Kick hard and follow up immediately: A Punch or a Palm Strike to the nose as you land forward, and then a Groin Kick and a Knee Strike to the face of the opponent bending in pain.



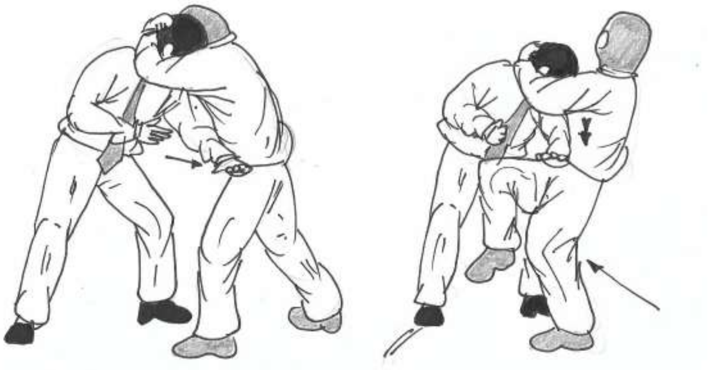
Another Leg Block: Stop Front Kick to the knee of the developing Low Kick

4.5 Defenses against Knee Strikes

Krav Maga makes ample use of the ***Knee Strike to the groin*** because it is both simple and extremely effective. It is important to learn to 'see' the preliminaries to a Knee Strike in order to avoid it at all costs: once kneed in the testicles, your fighting chance is as good as gone.
Therefore, you should *always strike preemptively anyone trying to get into your close fighting range*. In close combat range, it is usually the first to strike who scores, no matter how good you are. Keep fanatically your safety distance and whip-strike the eyes or kick the shins of anyone trying to weasel himself too close.

...If your opponent nevertheless is close enough to launch a Knee Strike, your own knee **should already be on the way**! Or an eye poke. Or a Palm Strike.

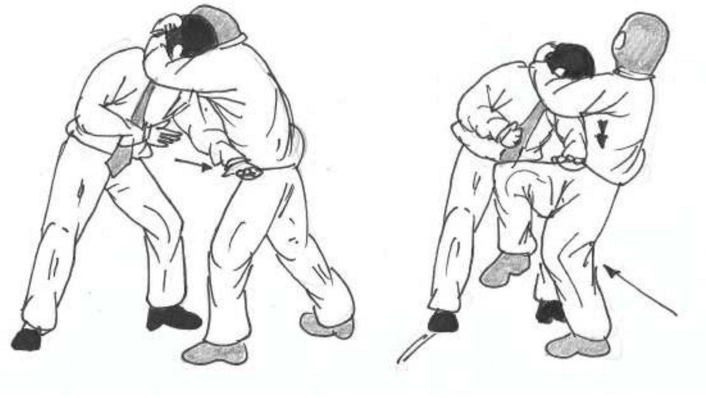
If you find yourself anyway in a clinch for some reason, it is wise to control the hip of the opponent with your forearm and to press down when the Knee comes up, as it certainly must. Take your hips back and sideways for extra caution, and follow up. You could follow up with a Palm Strike to the groin, or to the throat. Anything goes, and should be followed by a merciless *Retzev*.



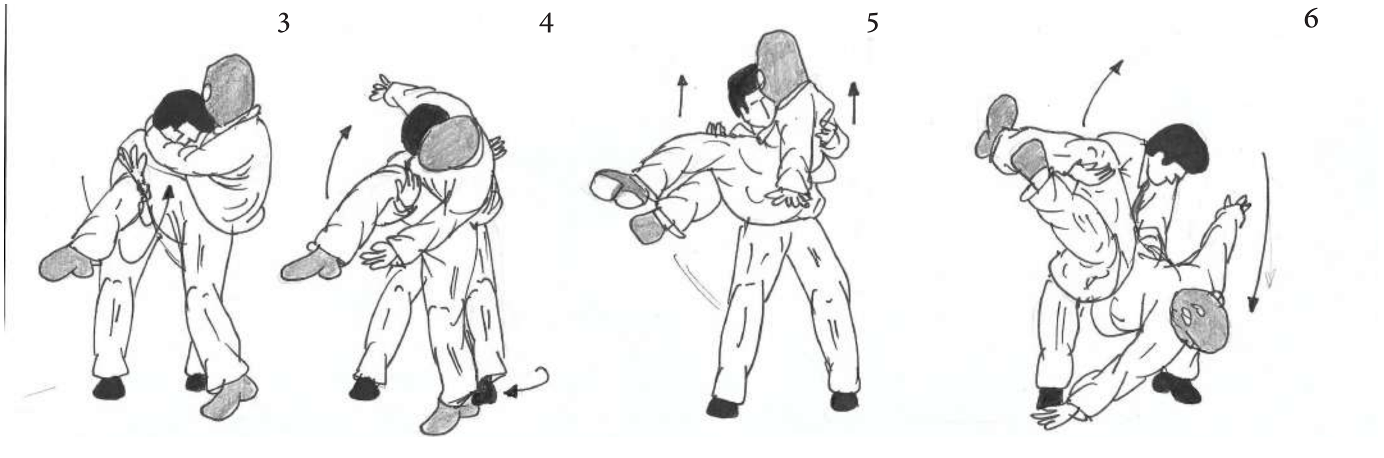
Evade back and out, and press the opponent's hip down to control the Knee Strike

A follow-up that makes use of the Knee Strike itself is presented below.

As your opponent graciously 'gives' you his raised knee, you can scoop it up with your other hand for a very harsh Takedown. Lift his scooped knee and sweep his standing ankle while lifting his body as high as possible. Then throw his head and upper body violently towards the floor while keeping his leg high.

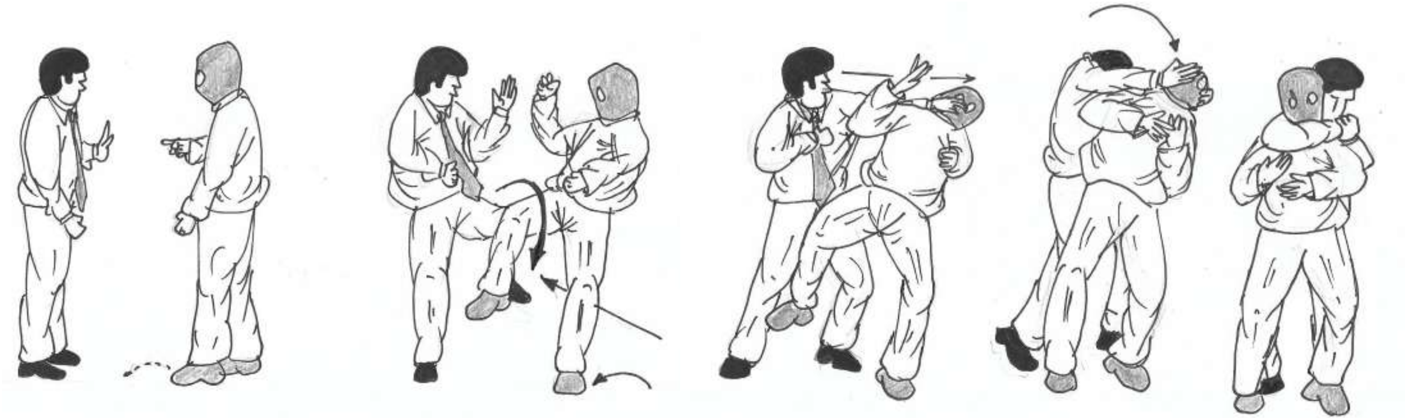


Control and scoop his knee for a violent takedown



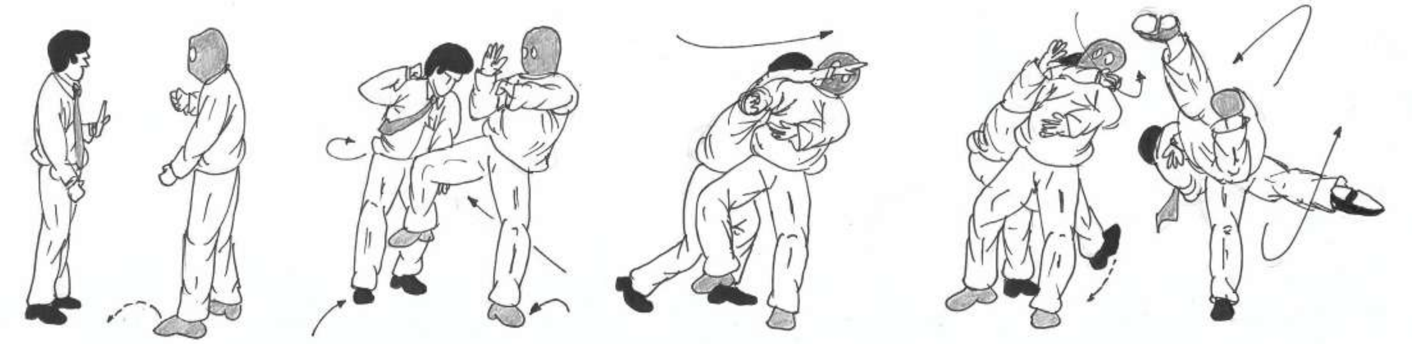
As you will make sure to keep potential assailants away (!), most Knee attacks will come from middle range and will require some preparations and footwork from the opponent. This will allow you to handle them in the same way you would handle a kick. In fact, a Knee Strike is not different from the chambering of a Front Kick. You should therefore evade out while controlling (and deviating) the Knee Strike, either with the leg or with the hand.

The first Figures illustrate how to ***leg-block***, coming from the outside in, the incoming Knee Strike. Nearly simultaneously, extend your front hand into his eyes. Catch his head by the hair, the ear, the nose, or anything possible, and pull his head back to 'open' his *throat* to an incoming 'chop' (*Knife-hand Strike*). As he is flustered and as you 'own' his back, you can set a Rear Naked Choke. Make sure you use your elbow as a vise from which you press his carotid arteries from both sides. Be careful to release the hold as soon as the opponent loses consciousness: ***this is a very dangerous and potentially lethal hold, to be used only in extreme cases of self-defense. CAUTION.***



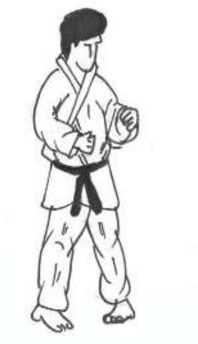
Leg-block a Knee Strike and lash out for the eyes first

The next set of Drawings, at the top of next page, illustrates how to pivot and slightly ***evade out***, while controlling/blocking the attack with the hand. Go forward into his momentum with a Forearm or Ridge-hand Strike to the neck, very much like a 'Clothesline' manoeuver. Keep control of his neck (in a choke-like hold) and use his lack of balance to reap his standing leg in a classic Takedown (O Soto Guruma). Twist him over your hip and lift his leg as high as possible to make him fall on his head. Keep at it with stomps if necessary.



Evade and block, for an immediate forward-charging Clothesline Strike

And a last word about Groin Knee Strikes. The groin being such a sensitive target (as mentioned in a previous Part), it is important to be always conscious of its vulnerability and of its situation vis-à-vis the opponent. By keeping your upper thighs squeezed together, you can prevent the success of most groin attack. Try it and learn to use this simple trick in any case in which you are in potential danger of a groin attack. There are several major *Karate* styles built around a posture called '*Sanchin Dachi*' (The Hourglass Posture) that keeps the thighs squeezed together and makes their disciples very impervious to groin kicks and knee strikes. The constant use of this posture requires serious training, but the *Krav Maga Artist* will simply remember the trick.



Sanchin Dachi
- The Hourglass Posture of Okinawan Karate

Nobody's a natural. You work hard to get good and then work to get better. It's hard to stay on top.
~Paul Coffey

5.5. DEFENSES AGAINST GRABS

Grabs are not innocuous, they are aggressive invasions of your personal space and they are generally the beginning of a more serious attack. You have to react immediately to neutralize the danger and to free yourself from an unlawful restraint on your freedom of movement.

5.1 Wrist Grabs

a. Grabs with one hand

We shall present the classic release maneuvers against ***Wrist Grabs***. The basic principle is very simple: twist the wrist to place the narrowest side in front of the gap between the opponent's thumb and his other fingers, and pull. There is a little more than that, but we'll come back to it after an important introduction.

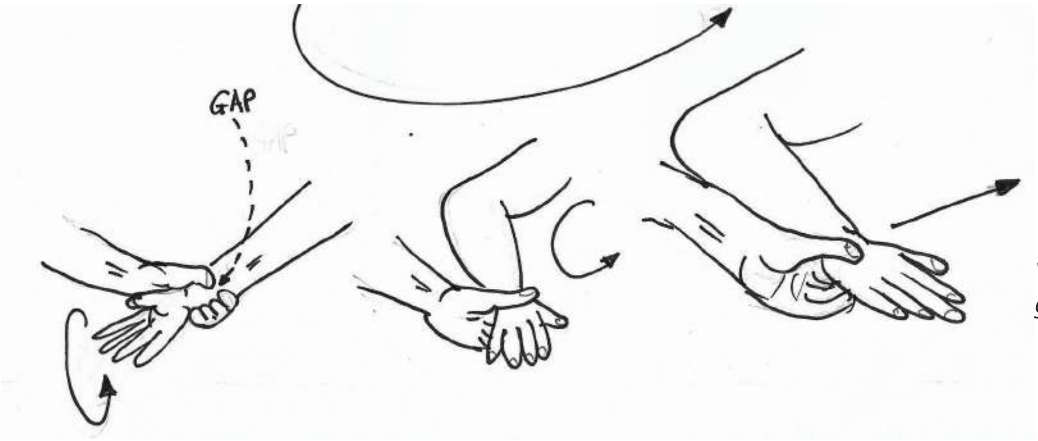
If someone grabs your wrist in a clear self-defense situation, **do not try to free the grabbed wrist!** First of all: strike your assailant. That's right, forget about pulling your wrist out. At least until later!
When someone grabs your wrist, you are being attacked (unless it is drunken uncle Charlie). The wrist grab is not only an invasion of your personal space, an unagreed restriction of your freedom of movement, a bullying action and so on; it is above all the beginning of an attack. It causes you to focus your attention on your wrist and it restricts your ability to defend yourself. Something is going on, and it is very possible that a punch or a kick is already on its way to you. If you concentrate to free your arm, you'll be hit; if you try to use your other hand to deflect an attack, you are limited and put off-balance by the grab.
Therefore, if you have allowed someone to get close enough by refraining from preemptive strikes, and if he then grabs your wrist(s), there is only one thing to do: ***Strike immediately in the most punishing way possible***. Only lashing out at once and aggressively will allow the foiling of the aggressor's plans and the dimming of the attack probably on its way to you.
Remember also that the 'grabber' is not necessarily alone. Strike, free yourself and look around.

We shall now explain the basic principles of freeing your wrist from a grab. Keep in mind that these small arm moves will come **after** you have struck your assailant and during the *Retzev* that must follow. It should be an instinctive releasing move made easy by the fact that your opponent has been mollified by previous strikes.

The *principles* are simple, and stay valid for all situations:

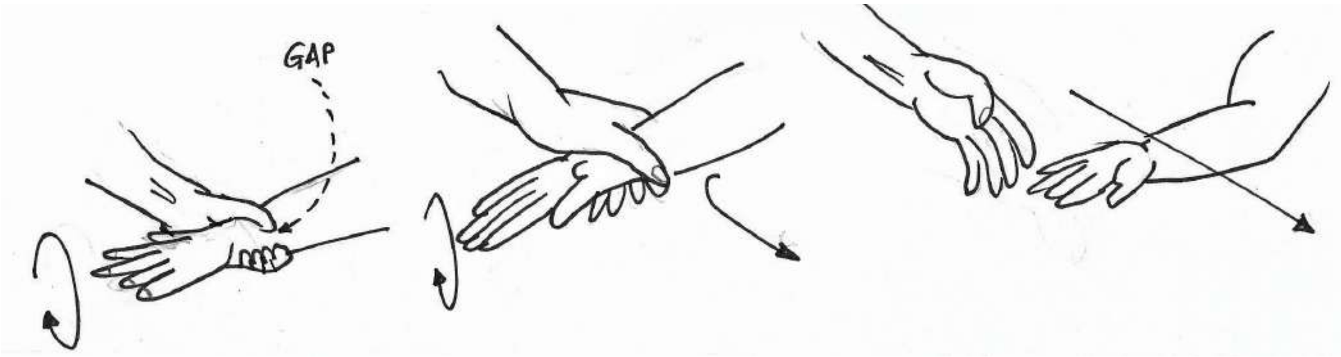
- Twist the grabbed wrist in order to place the narrow side towards the 'gap' between the opponent's thumb and his other fingers.
- Pull the wrist through the gap.
- Pull by rotating your hand on an axis that is close to the grabbing hand: by doing so you use an effective fulcrum to release yourself.
- Pull then with your body and not with your arm only.
- Do this after neutralizing the threat.

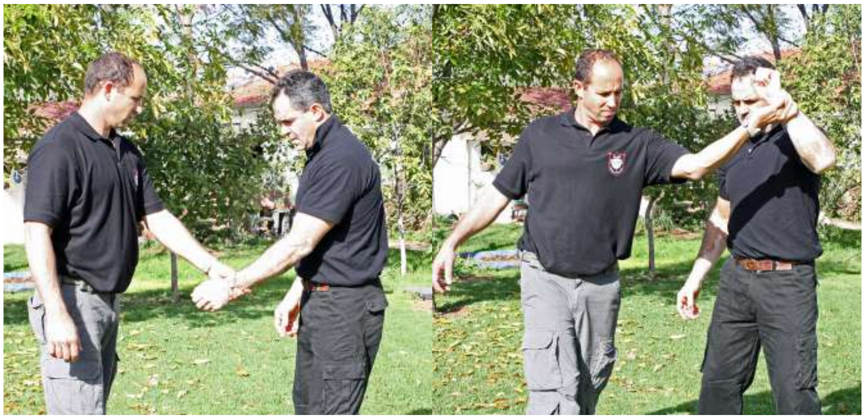
The first set of Figures below illustrates the basic release technique in a classic **opposite-hand**-grabbing situation.



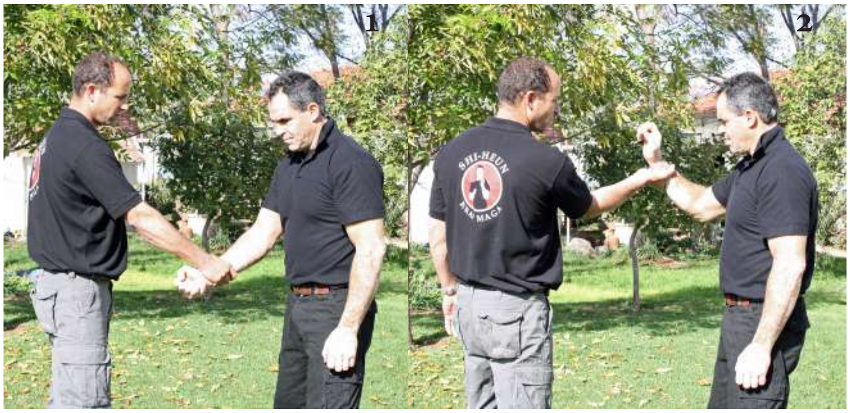
Wrist release: right wrist grabbed by left hand

The second set of Drawings shows the release based on the same principles, but for a **same-hand**-grabbing situation.

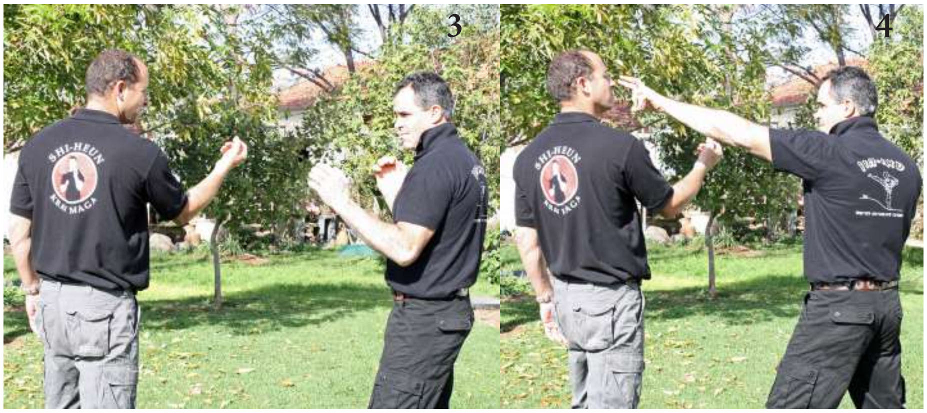




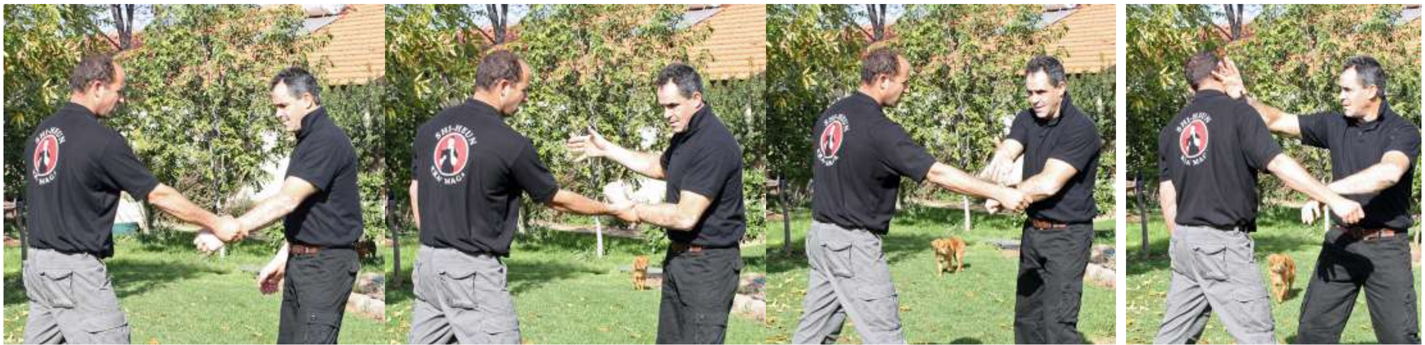
Left wrist release. After a preventive strike!



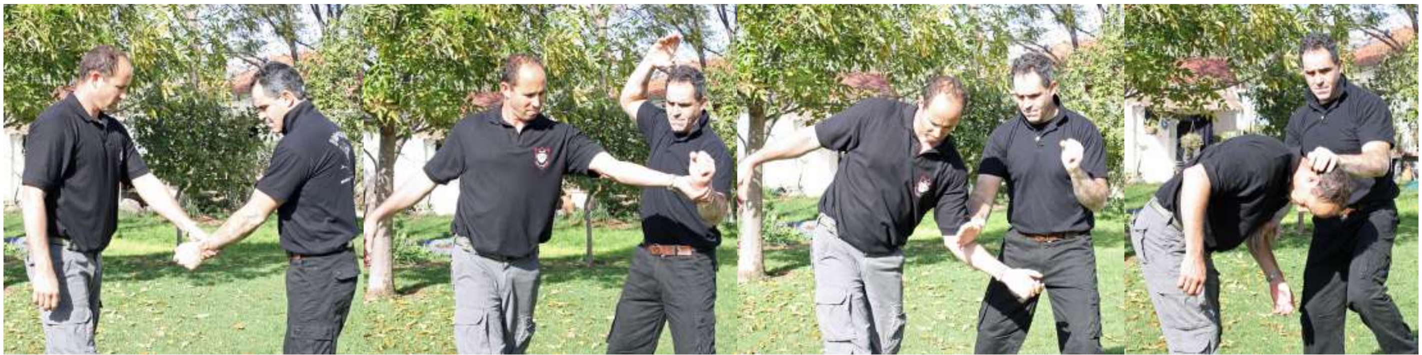
Right wrist release with follow-up. Remember that the release comes after a protective strike



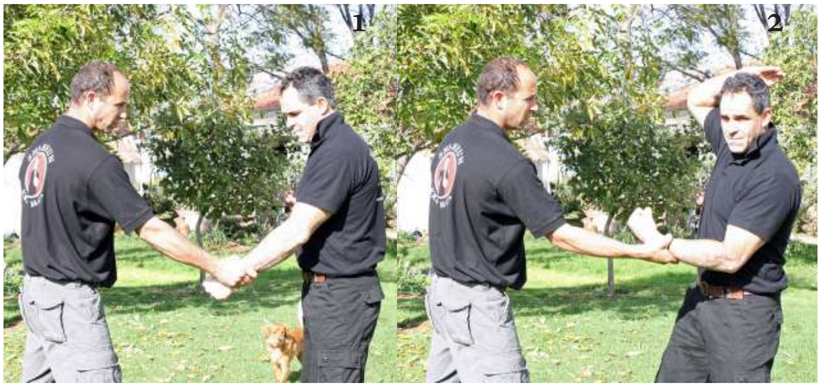
Now, the next phase is to understand that these releases can also be helped by a simultaneous strike on to the grabbing wrist. All principles stay valid: first strike to stop any attack, then release through the gap. See next page…



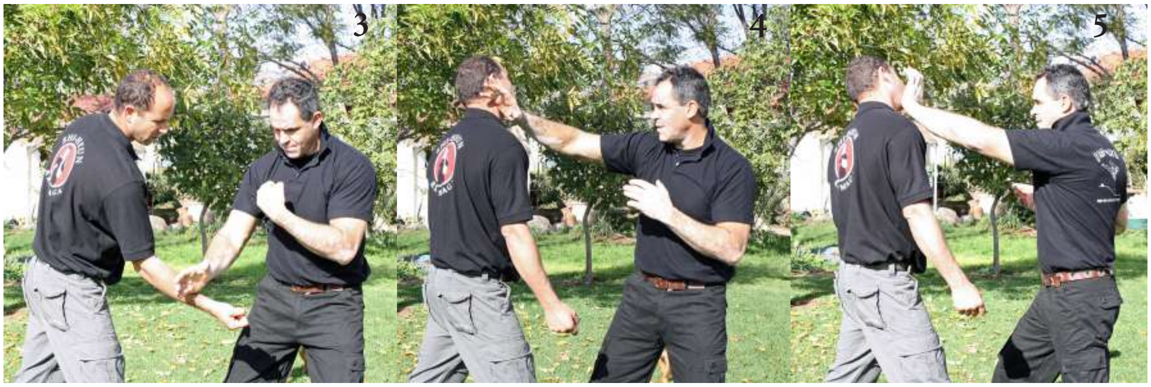
Opposite grab: Slap the wrist as you pull through the gap and follow up



Hard Knife-hand Strike on to the forearm as you pull the wrist through the 'gap'. Strike to hurt, and then follow up

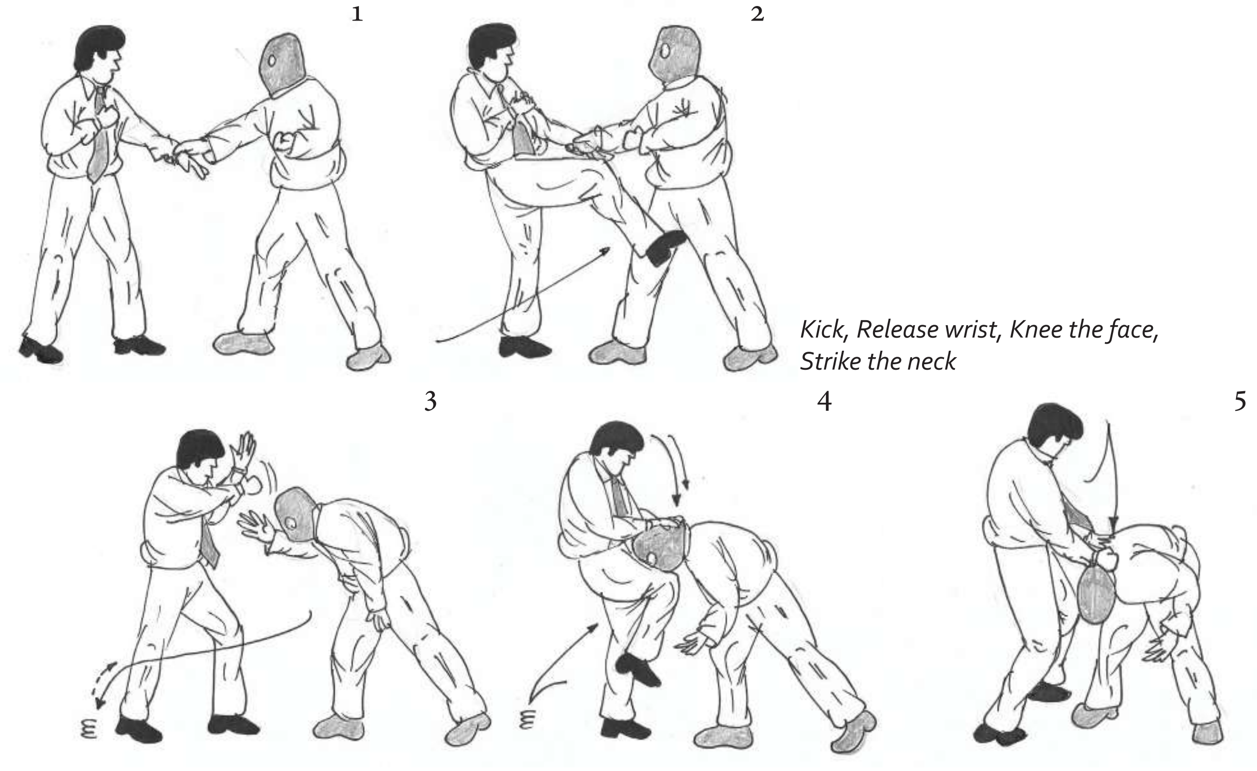


Violent Knife-hand Strike to the grabbing forearm while you pull the wrist through the 'gap' for release. Start your Retzev with a Knife-hand Strike to the side of the neck and a Palm Strike to the face.



And now we put it all together…

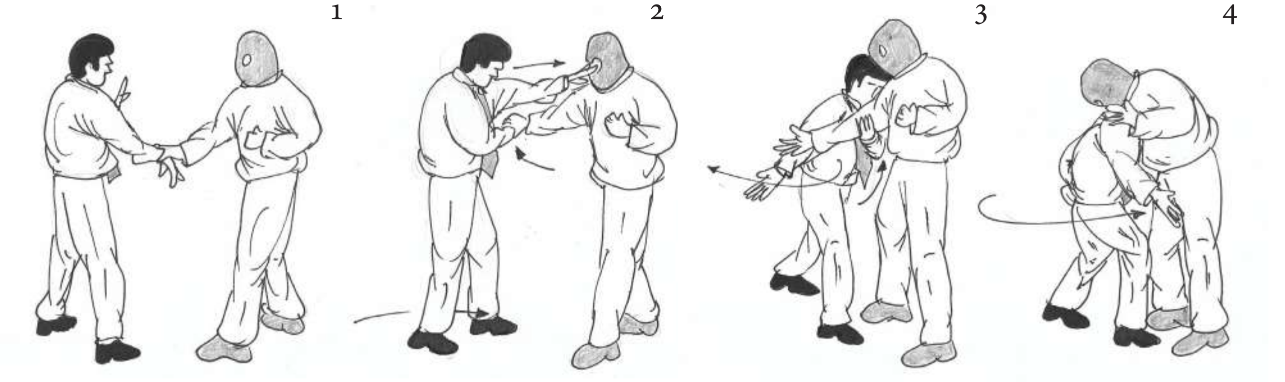
In the first example, illustrated below, an assailant grabs your wrist with his opposite hand. Is he just fooling around? Is he going to pull you towards him? Is he going to punch you? … Who cares? You immediately *front-kick his groin* and execute the Wrist Release technique while lowering back your kicking leg. Let your kicking foot rebound on the floor to help launch a Knee Strike to the face of the crouching opponent. Pull his head down with your hands for a more effective strike. And keep his head down for a Hammer-fist or Forearm Strike to the neck.

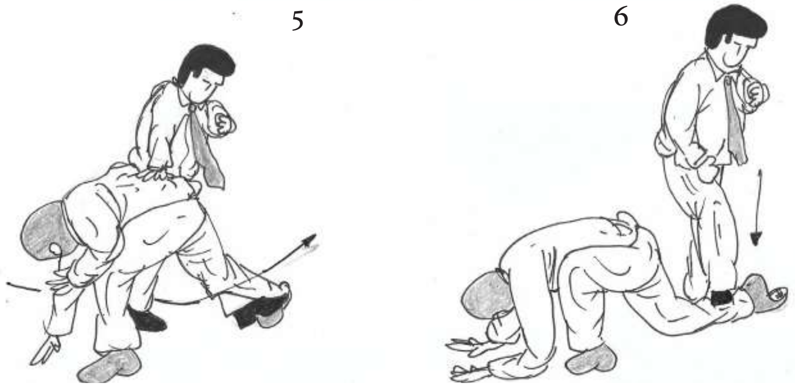


Kick, Release wrist, Knee the face, Strike the neck

If the assailant grabs your right wrist with his right hand (*same-side grab*), you should immediately whip his eyes to prevent any strike and to mollify him before your release. The release technique follows the principles presented at the start of the Chapter for same-side grab, *but you simultaneously step out and you slap his grabbing elbow from the outside.* Your freed hand comes back immediately for a violent Palm Strike a few inches into his groin area. As he bends down in pain, push him down forward while kicking his front ankle back and up. Immediately follow up by stomping his Achille’s ligament. This is all illustrated at the top of next page.

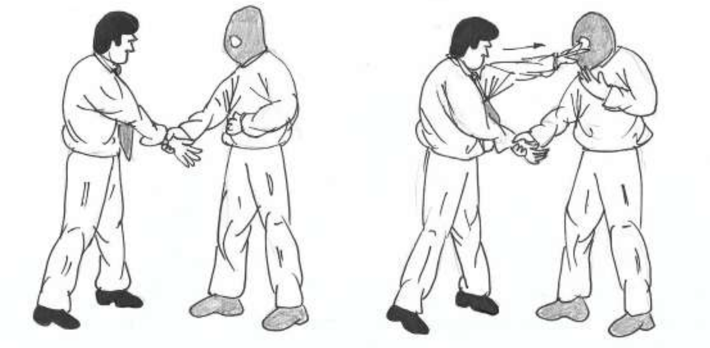
➡

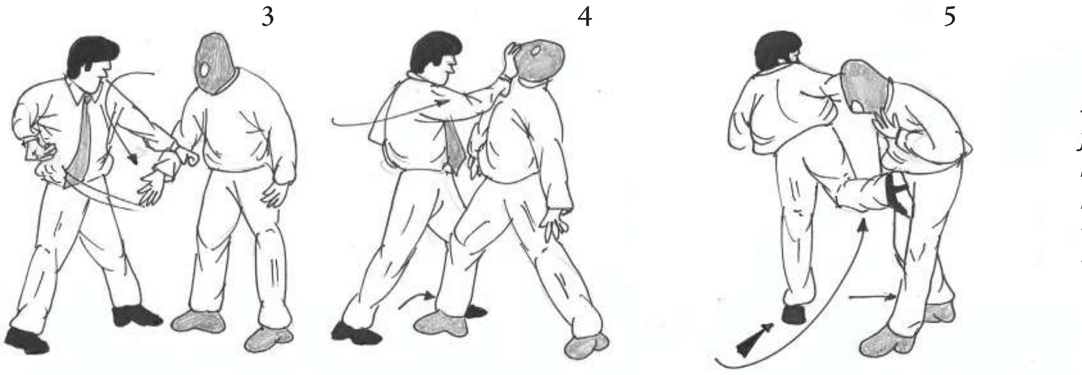




Attack the eyes, Release while also slapping the elbow; Palm-strike the groin; Sweep-kick the ankle; Stomp the exposed Achille's Tendon

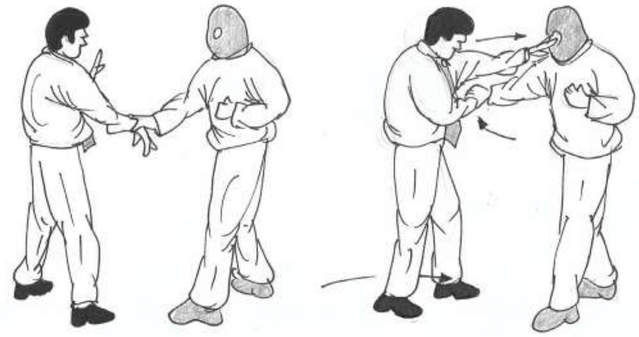
The next set of Drawings illustrates, again, a defense against a wrist grab *with the same hand*. You immediately fast-whip the opponent's eyes, and then use the same hand to strike down the opponent's forearm in a 'Downward Block' fashion (*Gedan Barai – Karatedo*). This is not a Block, but a ***Strike*** meaning to hurt, and you simultaneously pull your grabbed hand out according to the principles of wrist release presented above. You follow up immediately with a very natural hip-powered Palm Strike to the chin or the nose. You could continue with an Outward Ghost Groin Kick that allows you to move on or check your surroundings.

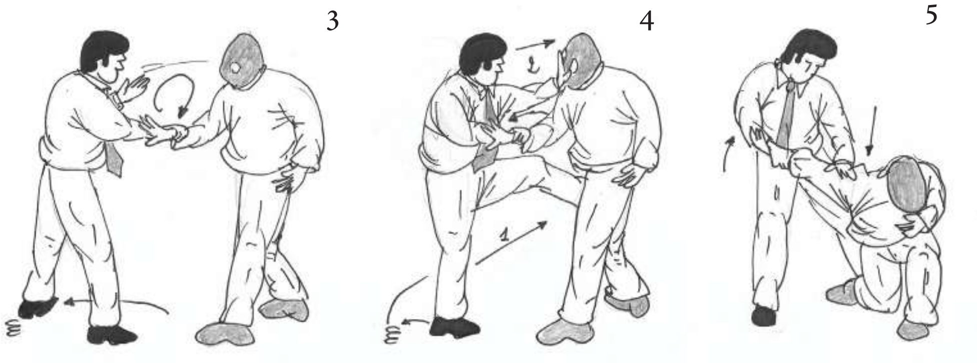




Whip the eyes, Strike the forearm while releasing, Palm-strike the face, Kick the groin

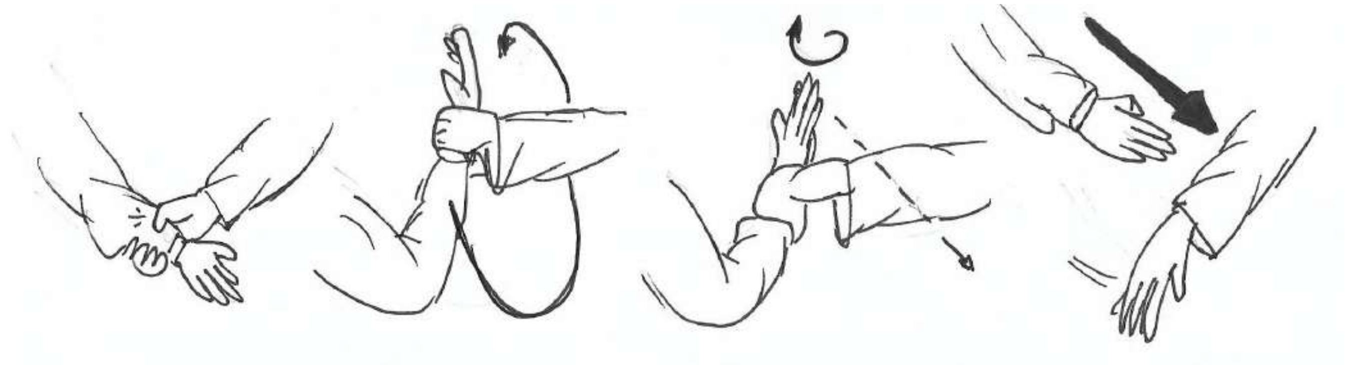
The coming Illustrations show another kind of technique against a *same-side grab*. You immediately step slightly forward with an Eye Poke or an Eye Whip. You use the forward movement to start encircling his wrist from the outside, but you step back at once while completing the '***counter-grab***'. Kick him in the groin and palm-strike his face as you lower the foot. You are now in perfect position to push him down in a classic Armlock. The Armlock can be used to control him, or it can be a Strike to the extended elbow to damage the joint





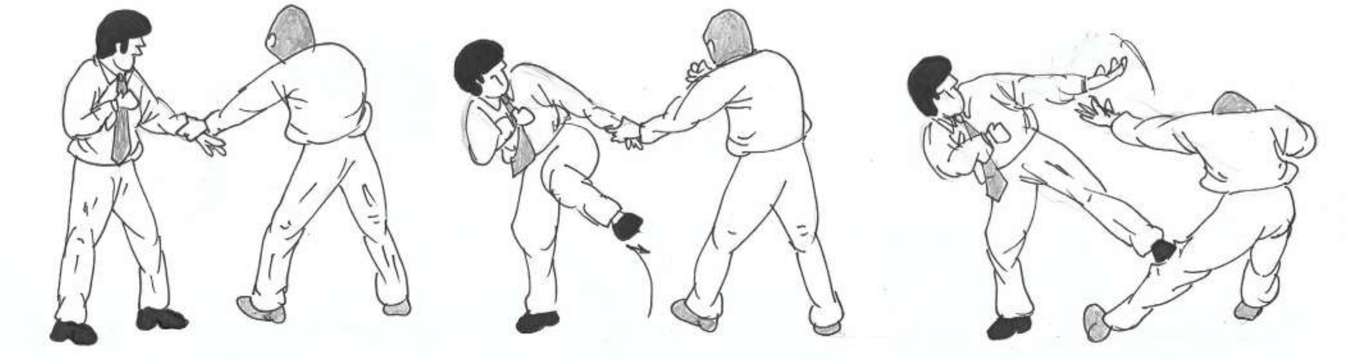
Poke the eyes, Reverse the grab, Kick the groin, Palm-strike the face, Set an arm-lock

This 'Counter-grab' technique (based on the 'Ni-kyo' Second Principle of *Aikido*) is simple and answers to all Principles of Release already mentioned. The release technique can end in the Counter-grab, or simply in the Knife-hand 'cutting' through his wrist, as illustrated below. In the same-side grab situation, you circle his grabbing hand from the outside while twisting your wrist. It is best done while pulling the arm towards yourself. You then invert the twisting of the hand to place the Knifehand side towards the grabbing wrist. You then start pushing back towards the opponent, while 'cutting' through his wrist (or while counter-grabbing his wrist). If you cut violently you can also cause him some joint damage while releasing your wrist.



The 'No counter-grab' version of the release technique: cut violently **through** *the grabbing wrist!*

And we shall finish this section with an example in the spirit of the KISS principle. Simple is always best. An assailant grabs your wrist with the same hand. Pivot slightly to lift the front leg in Side Kick Chamber. You naturally pull back on your wrist. As he reacts to pull back on your pulling, he helps your momentum to crush his knee. You simultaneously release your wrist according to the basic principles described. Follow up, preferably by stomping his joints.



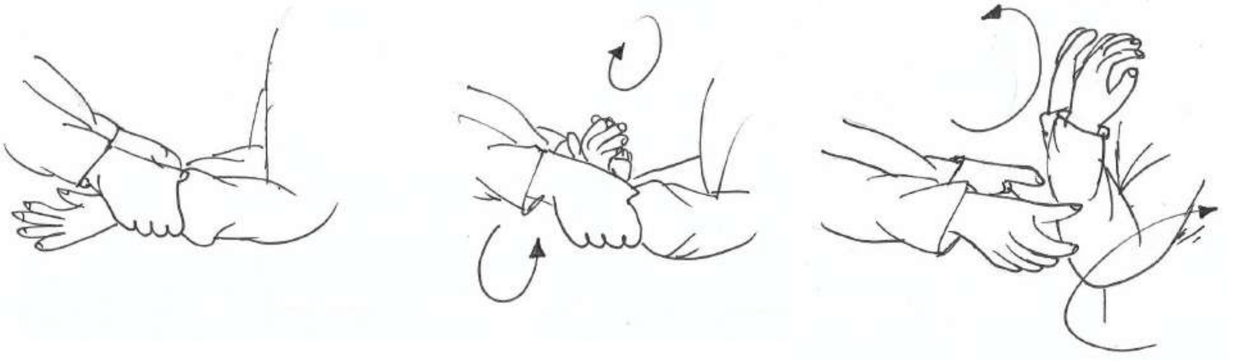
He grabs and you simply side-kick his knee

b. Grabs with two hands

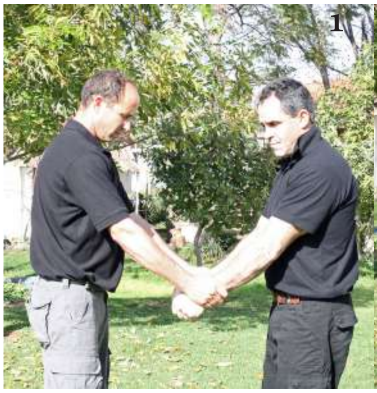
When your opponent uses ***both hands*** to grab one or both your wrists, he is not in a situation in which he can punch you fast. You should still beware of a kick, a knee strike or a head butt though. This is still a serious attack and an infringement on your freedom of movement. Maybe your are grabbed to give time for an accomplice to approach, or in order to pull you, or because you are holding a weapon or something that can be used as one. Wrist-grabbing can also be a way to close the gap safely: he will then release you suddenly and strike in close quarters.
You therefore have, again, to strike immediately to prevent any follow-up and to mollify him before your own escape technique.

b1. The release technique from ***a grab of both your wrists*** is identical to the 'opposite-side' grab release presented in the previous section: it is simply doubled and one side is the mirror image of the other. The release principles are identical. See Figures and Photos at the top of next page.

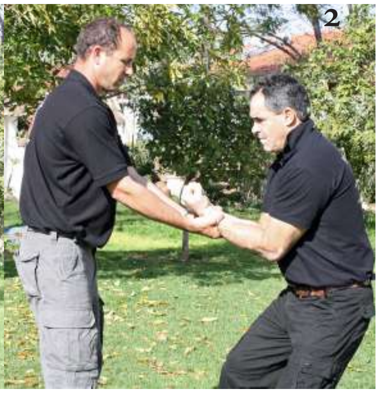
➔



Classic release technique of the two-wrists grab; of course, comes after a preventive strike

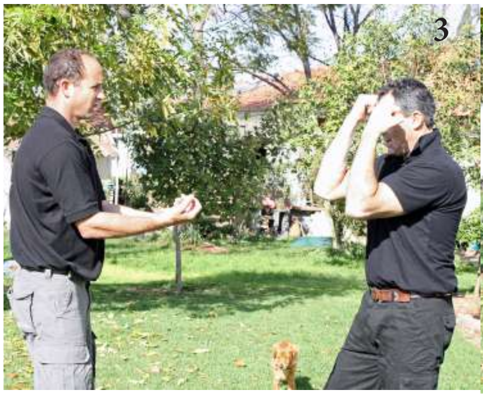


1

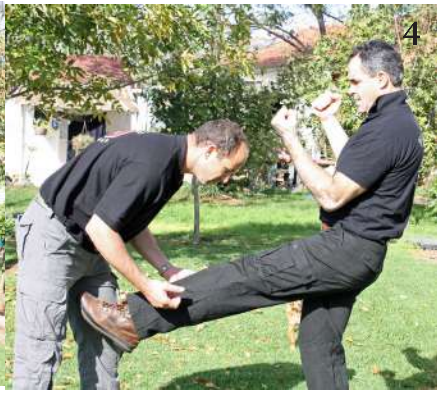


2

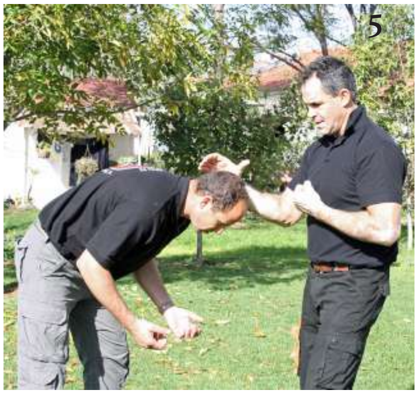
Double wrist grab release and follow-up of Groin Kick and Neck Hammer-fist Strike



3

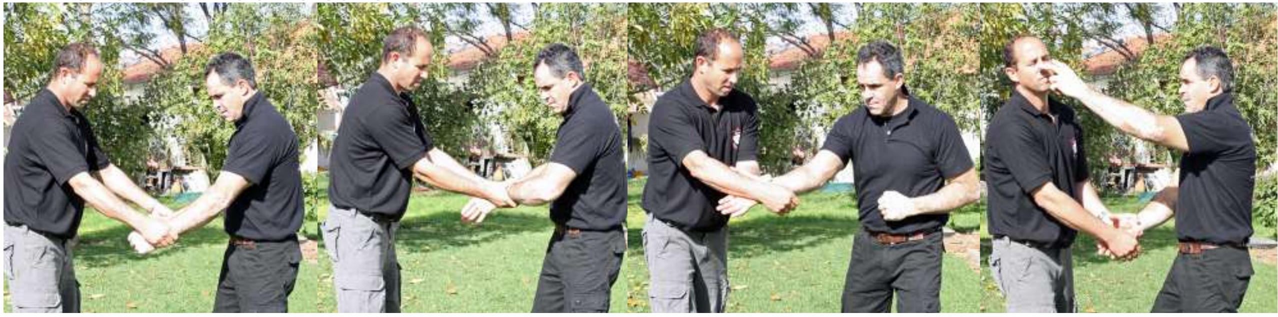


4



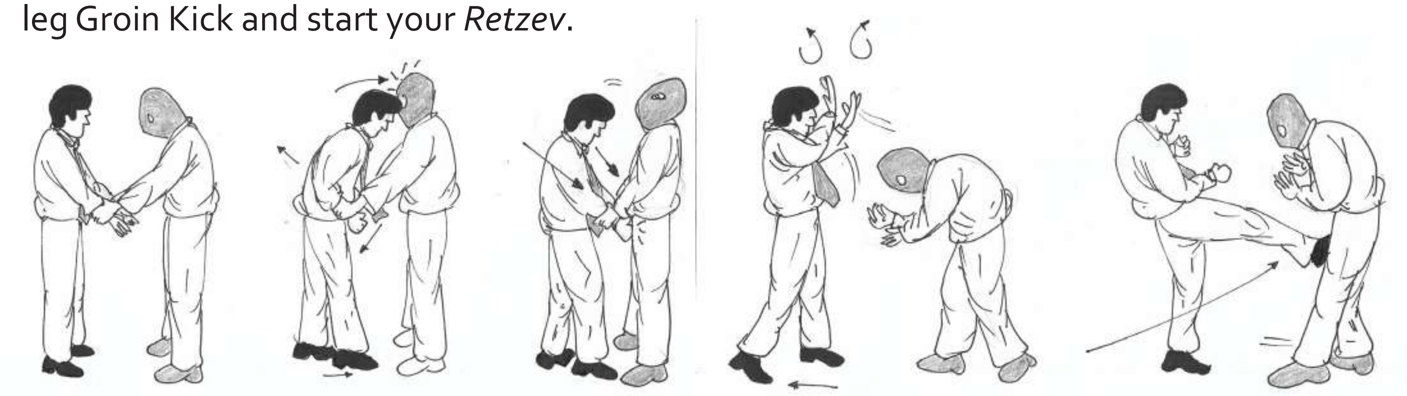
5

An alternative to the classic double wrist grab release, *would be releasing only one wrist*. And your counter will certainly make him release the other one. In this version, you effect the classic ***one-wrist*** opposite-side release, while helping by striking the grabbing forearm with your other still-grabbed hand. It is quite simple, and the Photos below will make this much clearer.



Use a grabbed hand to help the release of the other one; then, strike!

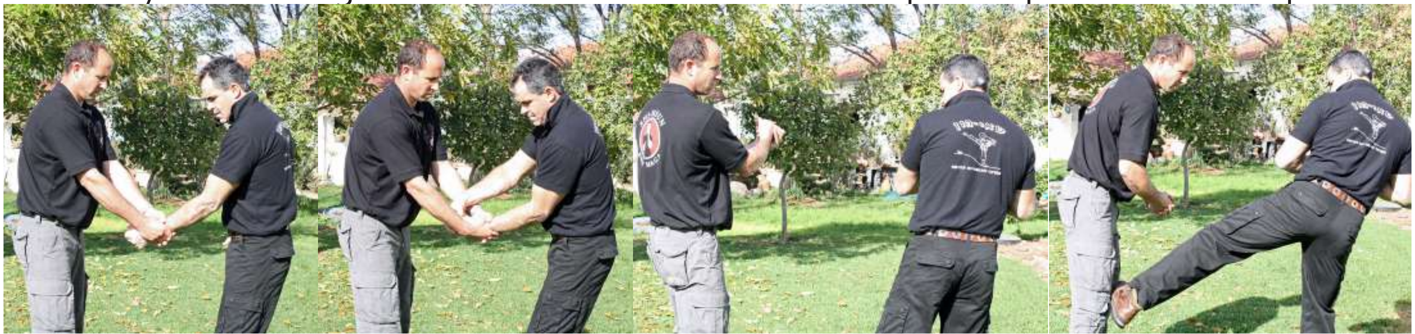
Okay! Let us now put everything together: preventive strikes, wrists release and follow-up. The Drawings below illustrate how to immediately head-butt the assailant's nose as he grabs your wrists. Do this *while pulling your wrists back towards you* to keep him close and to elicit a reaction. The instinctive reaction as you pull back, is to oppose the pull and to pull your wrists back to him. You use the momentum of his reaction to drive forward and strike his general groin area (or lower belly) with both fists. [Here is the place to mention that when you hurt a grabbing assailant, his instinctive reaction is NOT to release you even though he is hit; the atavistic instinctive reaction is to keep the grab, like a dog with his fangs into flesh]. Once you have punched his groin area, step deeply back while executing the classic wrists release. Follow up with a powerful rear-leg Groin Kick and start your *Retzev*.



Head-butt, Punch groin, Release, Groin-kick

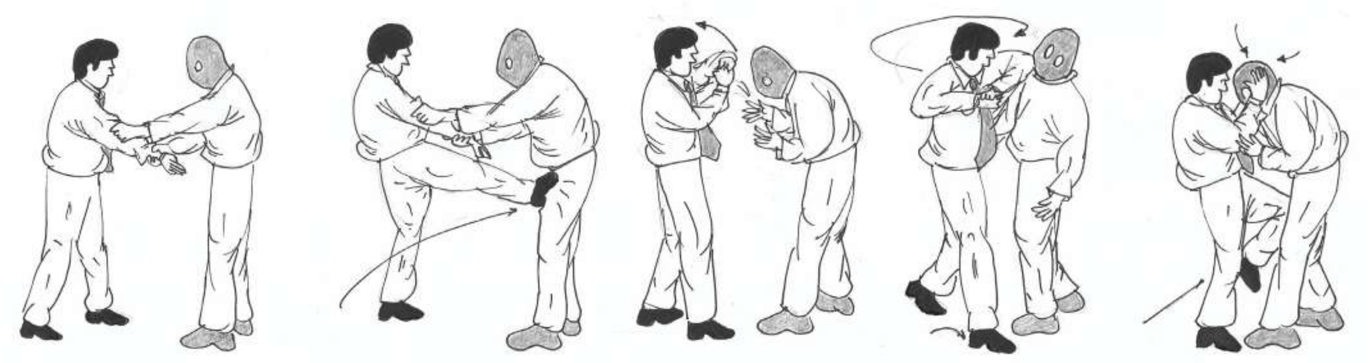
b2. The release technique from a ***single wrist grab with both hands*** is more specific. A classic release is not possible because the double grab is powerful and has no 'gap' to escape through. That also makes the preventive/mollifying attack even more important: Strike before the release in all cases!

The big advantage of this grab, from your point of view, is that both of the opponent's hands are busy. But remember: that it can be changing suddenly, that you could still be headbutted or kicked, that you could be violently pulled or placed off-balance… It is therefore a requisite, again, that you react immediately. After a preventive strike, you will make a fist with your grabbed hand, and come get grab the fist firmly with your other hand. You then use both arms (and your whole body) to pull the grabbed wrist up and away. The coming Photos illustrate the release technique and possible follow-up.



The release technique from a two-handed grab of your wrist, and Low Side Kick follow-up

The applied example illustrated by the Drawings below handles a slightly different grab: ***one wrist and the second hand grabs the arm of the same side***. This has no bearing on the release technique, but it is there to show that small variations of the attacks should not require other techniques if the principles are respected. The defense presented in the example is simple: kick the opponent's *groin* immediately as he grabs you. Do not wait to be pulled or placed into an Arm-lock! The example shows a Penetrating Tilted-foot Front Kick to the general groin area, but it could be any other Front Kick towards the testicles. You can then execute the classic release presented above. Follow-up immediately with a Circular hip-powered Elbow strike to the side of his head. Grab his head, preferably by slapping both his ears, while throwing a very naturally-flowing Knee Groin Strike.



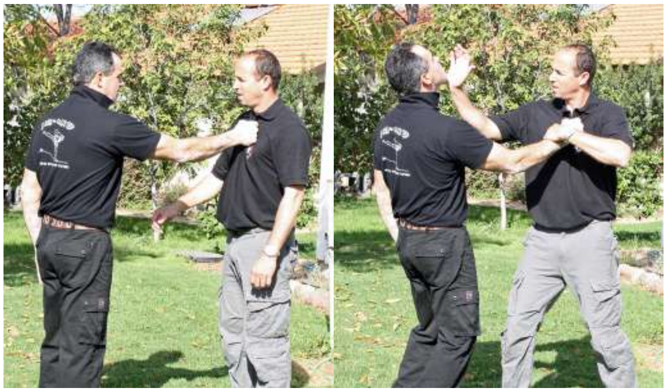
Groin Kick, Release, Elbow Strike, Groin Kick with Twin Ear Palm Strike

5.2 Lapel Grab

When someone ***grabs your lapel***, it means that he is much too close and has dodgy intentions. The situation is like for the wrist grabs: although it does not hurt you yet, it is a potentially very dangerous situation: you could be struck, pulled around, pushed to the wall, or simply immobilized until accomplices arrive.
In this day and age of gratuitous violence, you cannot take the risk to hesitate: the first punch could already be on his way. A preventive strike is needed in all cases, and at once. Just like for the wrist grabs, it is important to try ***to ignore the grab***. Getting your attention away from a real danger could be one of the intentions of the assailant. Strike immediately, and then, either execute a release, or keep striking vulnerable points. Remember that even if you hit the opponent on a vulnerable spot and cause him pain, the first instinctive body response will *not* be to release the grab. Keep striking or execute a strong release technique.

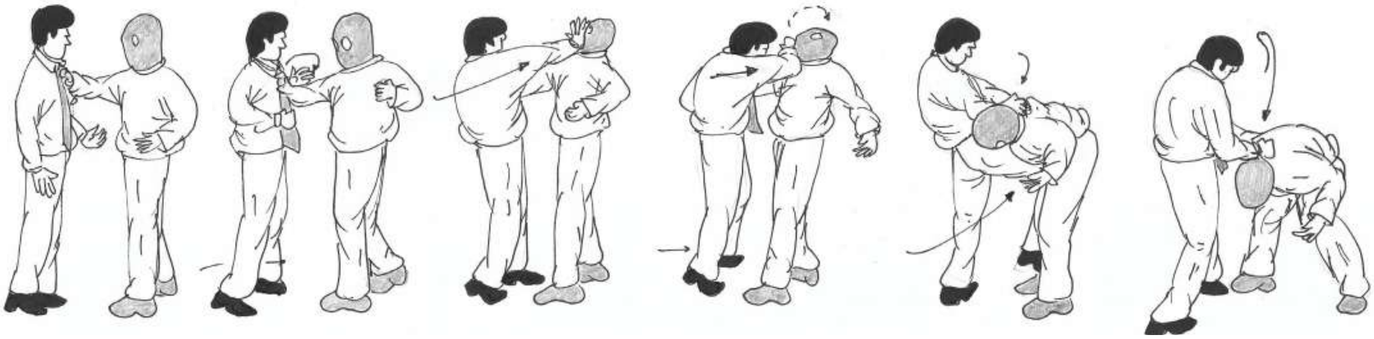
➔

As you are very close, you should also try to neutralize the grabbing hand while you strike, by simply grabbing it, as illustrated [You could use the grab to take the assailant into a Wrist Lock, but this is beyond the scope of beginner's *Krav Maga* that should be kept simple and intuitive under stress].



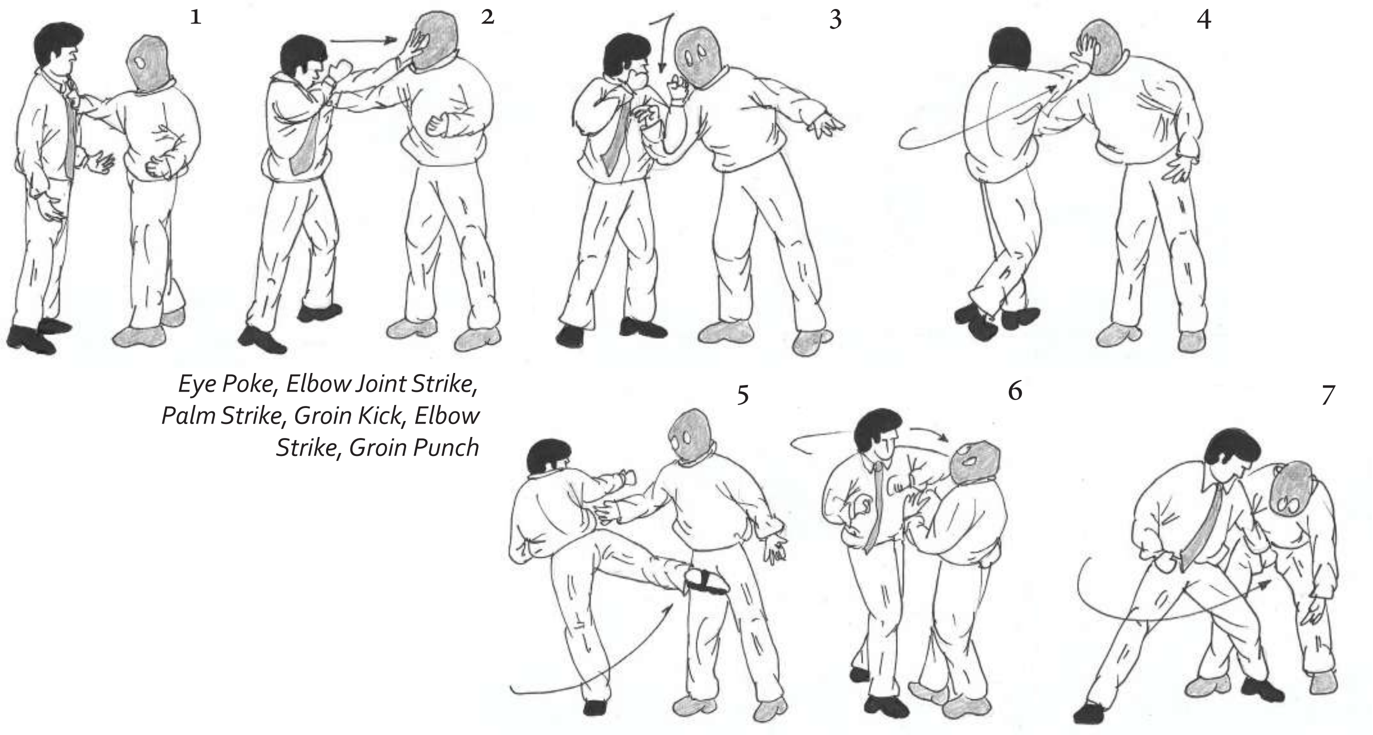
Lapel Grab: Palm Strike while controlling the grabbing hand

Putting it all together should look like the coming examples. The first set of Drawings illustrates how you immediately palm-strike the opponent's nose (with fingers close to the eyes), while getting hold of the grabbing hand. This should stop any punch or knee on its way to you. Continue with a smoothly-following Forearm Strike to the neck or throat, that becomes a collar/shoulder grab. A Knee Strike to the groin will get him to bend over, so you can hammer-fist the back of his neck or of his head.



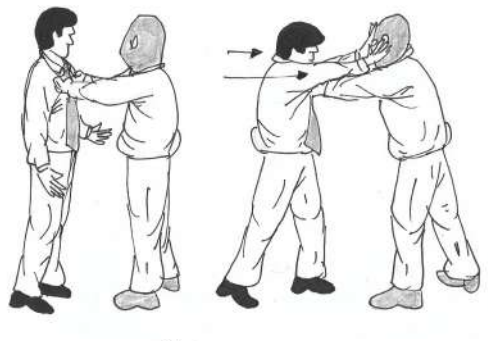
Palm Strike and Hand Grab, Forearm Strike, Groin Knee, Hammer-fist Strike

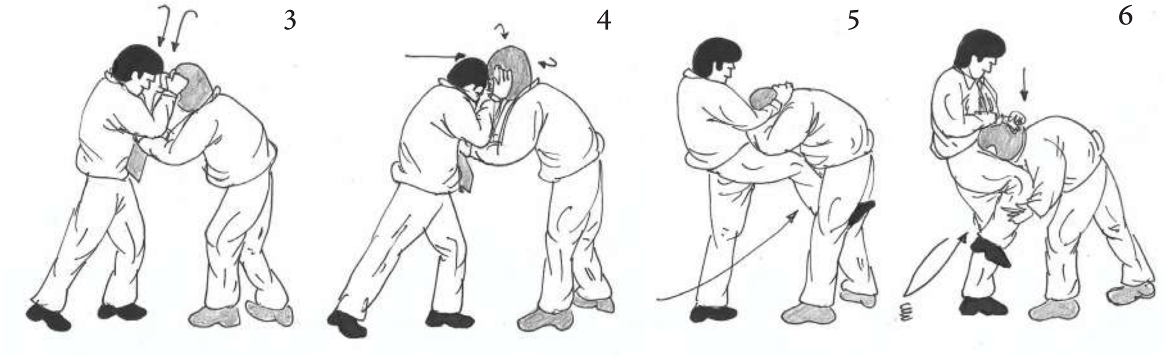
The second set of Illustrations, coming at the top of next page, shows how to execute a release from the grab, after the first preventive strike: use the hand on the grabbed side to strike his eyes ***over*** his grabbing arm. Retract your hand by executing a Downward Elbow Strike into his elbow joint, and follow up with a hip-powered Palm Strike to the nose. Your Hip Twist can naturally turn into a short Roundhouse Kick to the groin. A nice *Retzev* could start with a hip-powered Circular Elbow Strike to the side of the head and a Hammer-fist Strike to the groin.



Eye Poke, Elbow Joint Strike, Palm Strike, Groin Kick, Elbow Strike, Groin Punch

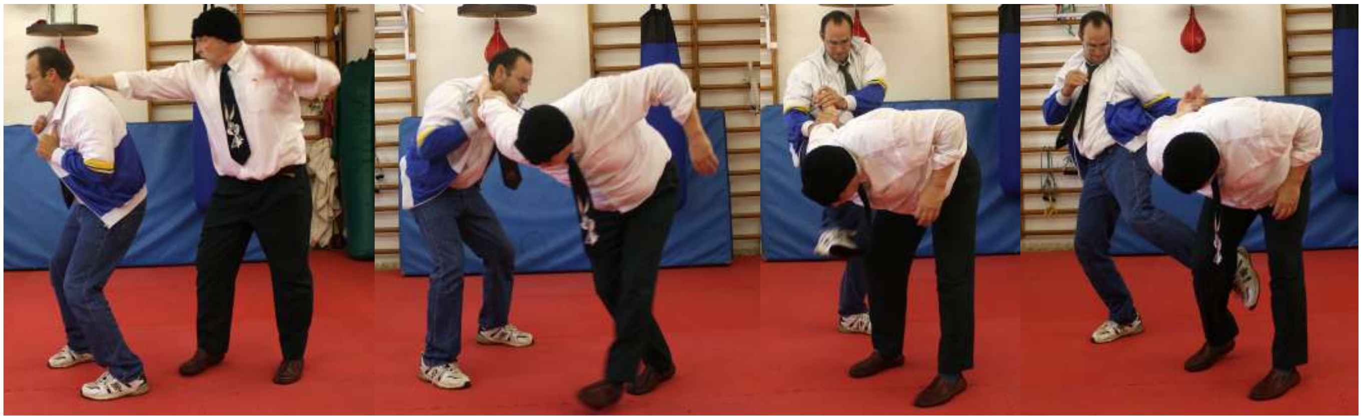
And we shall complete this section with the similar handling of a ***double shirt grab***. In this case, you should worry about a knee to the groin or a head-butt, particularly dangerous if you are pushed or pulled off-balance. Again, an immediate reaction is required.
In the example illustrated below, you strike the opponent's face in the area of the eyes *over* the grabbing arms. Act fast and directly towards the eyes to prevent any attack.
You can now retract the hands with a Double Downward Elbow Strike onto the grabbing forearms. Give it all you have: you have to make it painful. Follow up by slapping his ears forcefully in order to grab his head, for a Headbutt on the nose. Pull down on his head while continuing with a Groin Kick. The kicking foot will rebound on the floor for a Knee Strike to the face, face simultaneously pushed down by your hands.





Double Eye Poke, Double Elbow Joint Strike, Double Ear Slap, Headbutt, Groin Kick, Knee to the face

We shall now conclude with a close parent of the lapel grab: ***a collar grab from behind***. Whether the assailant pushes or pulls you, the first reaction should be the same: get hold of your lapels and pull strongly down in order to *lock* his fingers into your collar. Do not resist the push or the pull: yield to surprise him, and twist your head brusquely under his grip to face him while painfully locking his fingers. Take hold of his twisted arm to keep it in Arm-lock position, and kick him in the face. Kick through! Start your *Retzev*, for example with a 'Low Kick' to the knee joint.

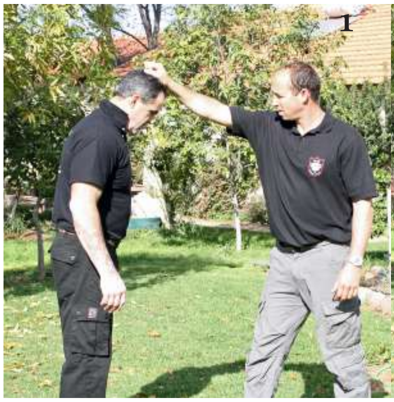


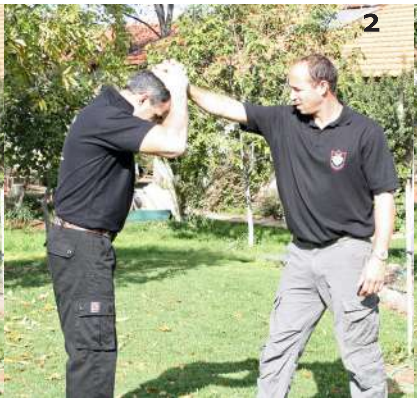
Lock the assailant fingers with your collar, twist and kick!

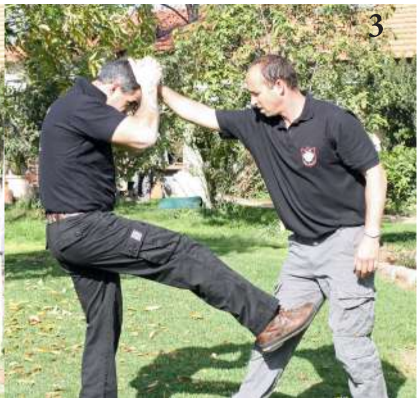
5.3 Hair Grab

When someone ***grabs your hair***, it is an escalation over grabbing a wrist or a lapel: not only is he invading your personal space and restricting your freedom of movement, but he is also causing you pain. This is an aggression *per se* that justifies the strongest response possible. Needless to remind the reader that it is probably the dangerous prelude to a kick, a punch or a takedown. The reaction must be immediate and the following *Retzev* must be merciless: when your hair is grabbed, you are already under serious attack.

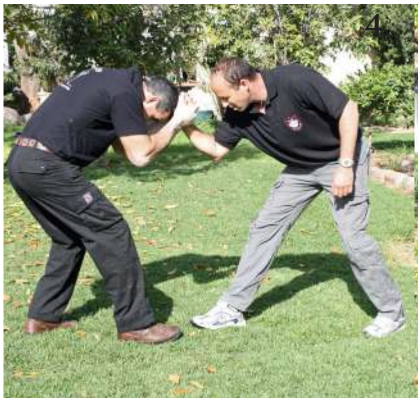
The Photos at the top of next page illustrate the classic Release Technique: Get hold of the grabbing hand with both hands and press firmly (*crush*) the grabbing fingers into your skull. This has the effect of (1) alleviating the pain slightly, of (2) achieving a strong hold and of (3) causing some pain to the aggressor. Nearly simultaneously, you should be kicking his groin. While you lower the kicking foot, you bend down ***violently*** at the waist and lower your head *as abruptly as possible*. As you hold his grabbing hand firmly, this causes a painful Wrist-lock, and the release of his grip. You can then kick him in the face and/or compound the Wrist-lock with an inside twist of the wrist (See illustrations). Start your own *Retzev* from then on.

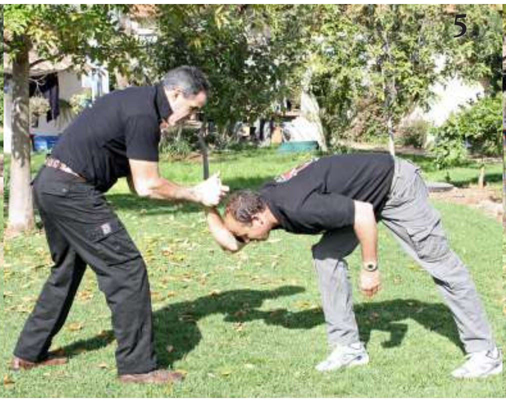


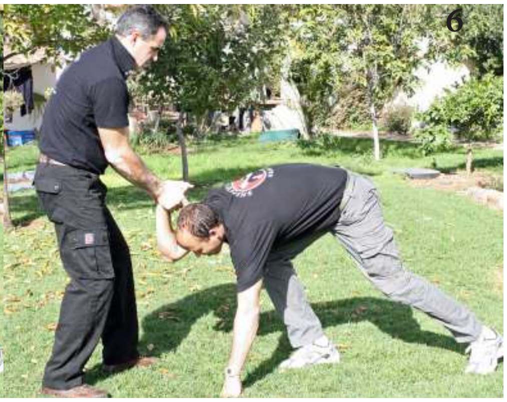




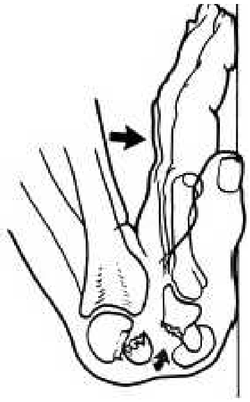
Crush the grabbing hand into your skull, kick the groin, bend violently to hurt the wrist joint, follow up





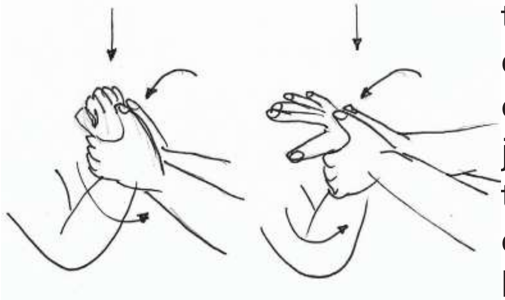


Wrist-locks, in basic *Krav Maga*, are not restraining techniques: they are not locks *per se*. The wrist-lock presented is to be used to hurt the joint and bring the opponent down. These locks in *Krav Maga* are not executed gradually, but ***brusquely and violently*** to shock the articulation. In the technique above, there are 2 Wrist-lock techniques used, and both must be seen as joint destructions and _not_ control techniques like in *Aikido*. The first Wrist attack is when you immobilize his hand on your skull and violently lower your head. The upward angle of the wrist joint will be jolted from 180 degrees to (much) less than 80 (See Illustration).

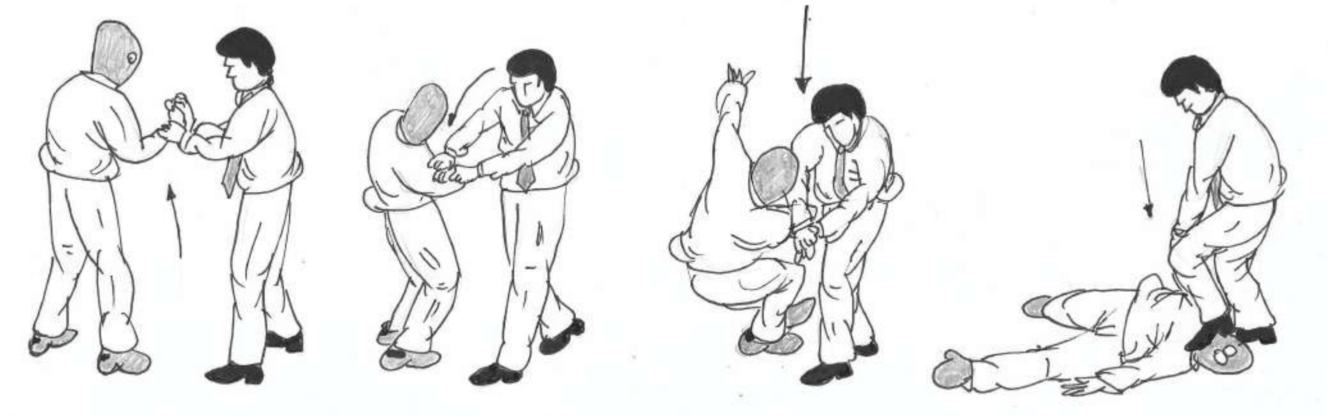


The effect of the bending over his wrist

Once you have freed the hand with the first Joint shock, you twist it to its in-side and press back in what is the *Ni-kyo* wrist-lock of *Aikido*. You push back the hand towards the forearm, and so diminish the downward angle of the wrist joint. The Illustrations show the classic wristlock, to be executed *fast and violently*. This will cause the opponent's fingers to open. One way to use this position to finish the fight is presented further down: lift the wrist up in order to push it back down and out, forcefully. You push down but close to his shoulder joint for a wrist/elbow/shoulder lock that will force him to fall down. Do this forcefully to damage the joints and ensure the takedown. As he lands down, you can stomp his head, armpit, and more.

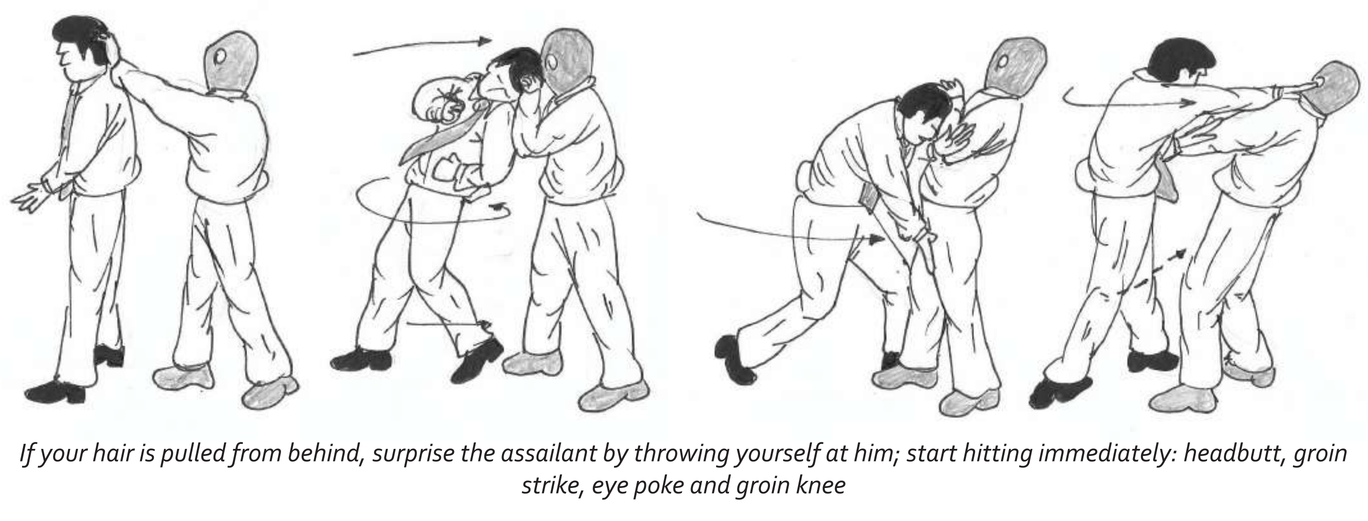


Classic Ni-kyo Wrist-lock



Wrist-lock Takedown and Stomp

We shall conclude this section with a defense against a ***hair grab from behind***. You do not know what the assailant has in store for you and you do not have the luxury to grab his hand and crush it into a wrist-lock. The best way to handle this situation is to surprise the attacker by jumping towards him while twisting. He expects you to resist, but, instead, you go with the flow and throw yourself at him. Twist and aim at *headbutting* him (with the side of the skull, as illustrated. Keep your momentum to crowd him and palm-strike his groin. You also use the other hand to catch his grabbing wrist from the outside and to remove his grab. The hand that struck his groin now goes up to poke his eyes. You can see from the Drawings below that your knee is in perfect position for a Knee Strike to the groin. Keep at it…



If your hair is pulled from behind, surprise the assailant by throwing yourself at him; start hitting immediately: headbutt, groin strike, eye poke and groin knee

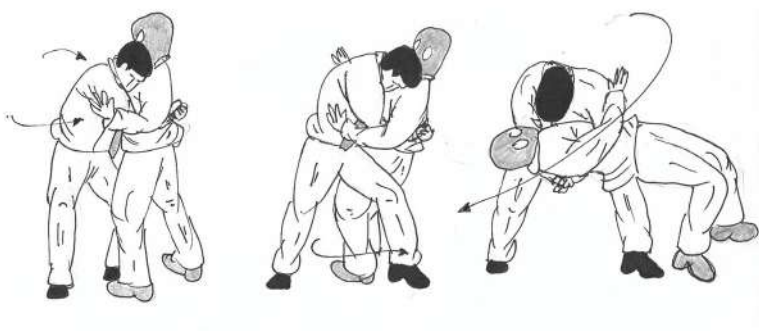
5.6. Defenses against Holds

6.1 Bear Hug from the Front

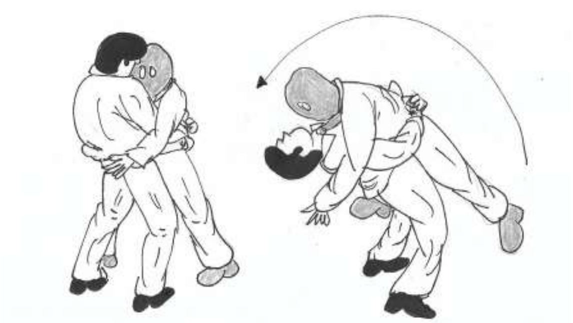
A Bear Hug from the front is a serious close combat attack. If you get caught, it means you have let your guard down and let an assailant much too close. You should keep your distance and always stop-strike anyone breaching your safety zone. Be aware of your surroundings, trust your gut and use preemptive strikes: this should help you avoid ending up in a *bear hug*.
There are two main types of Front Bear Hugs: your hands are either ***free*** or ***caught under the hug***.

a. Hands-free Bear Hug from the Front

Being caught in a ***Bear Hug with your hands free*** is not the worse of situations. As you will see, your hands will cause him serious damage fast, while his hands are neutralized by the Hold. So, why would someone want to take you in such a hug? *First*, he could be stupid. *Second*, beware of a possible incoming headbutt and/or groin Knee Strike: place your head besides his and squeeze your upper thighs in. *Third*, he could be very strong and try to painfully squeeze your chest or lower ribs before forcing you to the ground. But *Fourth* and most probably, it is the beginning of a Takedown, like what is illustrated in the coming sets of Drawings. Therefore, you need to act fast…

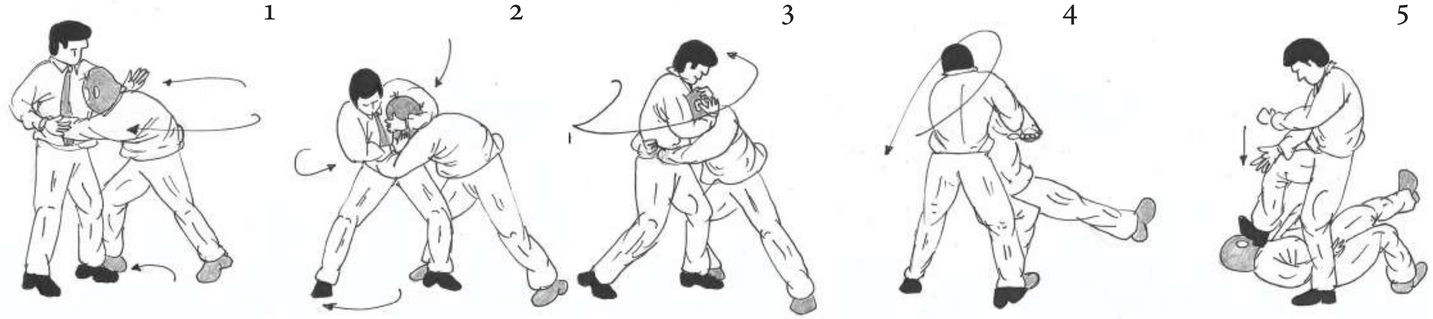


Outer Leg Block Takedown from a Front Bear Hug



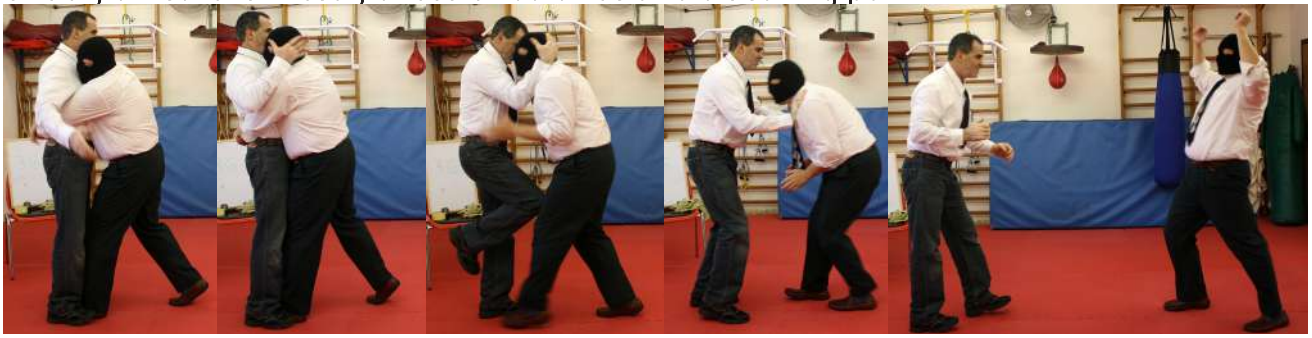
Suplex-like Sacrifice Takedown from a Front Bear Hug

The best approach is an early reaction before the assailant can fully set the Bear Hug. If you have not been able to offensively preempt the attack, and have let him get too close, you can still react as he dives to lock his hands in your back. The coming Illustrations show how to catch his head with both hands, make a large step rearwards, lower your center of gravity and deflect his forward attack momentum. Try to catch the head with forcefully, and with your fingers near or in his *eyes*. You then invert the direction of your reaction and pivot in the other direction: use your hips and body to pull his head in a downward spiral to the other side, all the way to the floor. Your fingers in his eyes will do much to help the takedown. Stomp him as he reaches the floor.

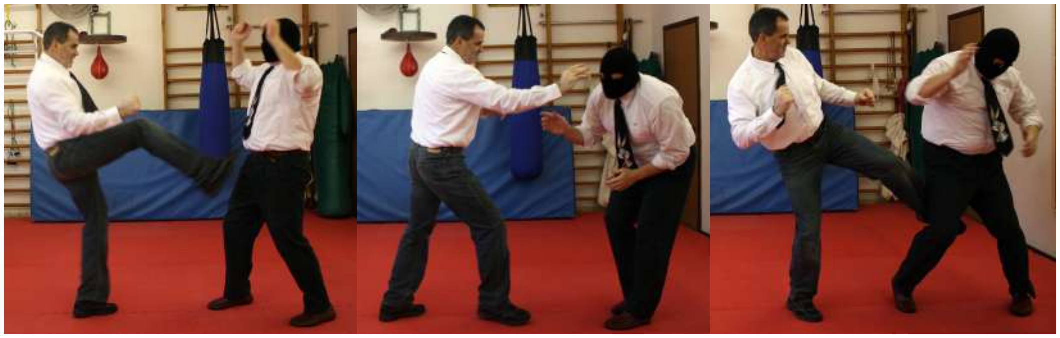


If the Hug is not set, pull away while grabbing his head for a Head Twisting Takedown

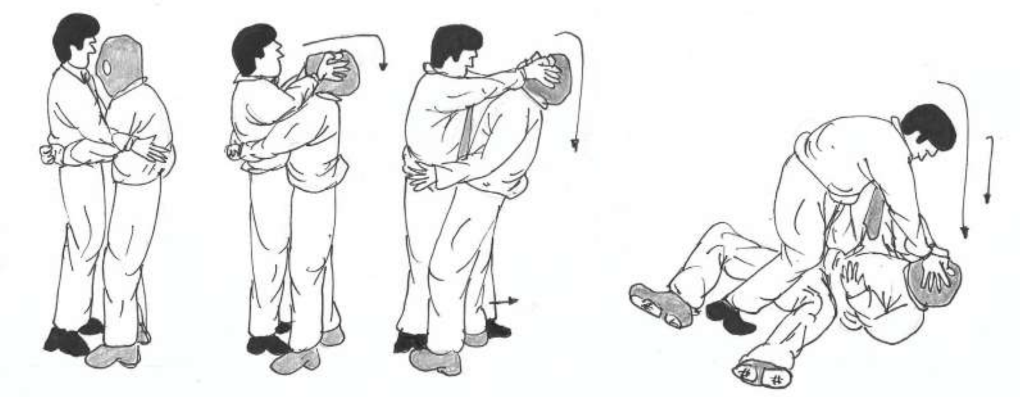
If you have been ***caught in the hug***, the following Photos illustrate one way to deal with the attacker. It is pretty simple: Immediately *slap his ears* forcefully, knee his groin and push him away. Follow him with a Front Kick to the groin, hopping if necessary to cover the distance. Keep the *Retzev* on with an Eye Whip and a Low Kick to the knee. Note that you can also headbutt his nose after the Twin Ear Slap, if this is something that is up your alley. When you slap his ears, you should strike as if you want your hands to meet in the middle of his head, and with the palms over the ears. This will cause a brain shock, an eardrum tear, a loss of balance and a searing pain.



Slap his ears as soon as he claps on the Hug, and start a merciless Retzev

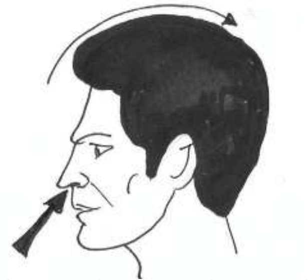


Here comes what to do ***once the hold is well set***, or if it is a very serious situation (like more than one attacker or a threat of permanent bodily harm). Press his eye balls with your thumbs and push his head back and down. Your hands hold and press his head at cheekbones level while applying pressure on the eyes, and you step deep behind his own legs. Apply just enough pressure to the eyes to force his head down to the floor with your hands. If necessary, slam his head on the floor before straightening back up for a Stomp or two on his ankle joints. [***CAUTION: This is an extremely dangerous technique, potentially crippling and even lethal. Drill with utmost control and use carefully and ethically only in a life-threatening situation***.]

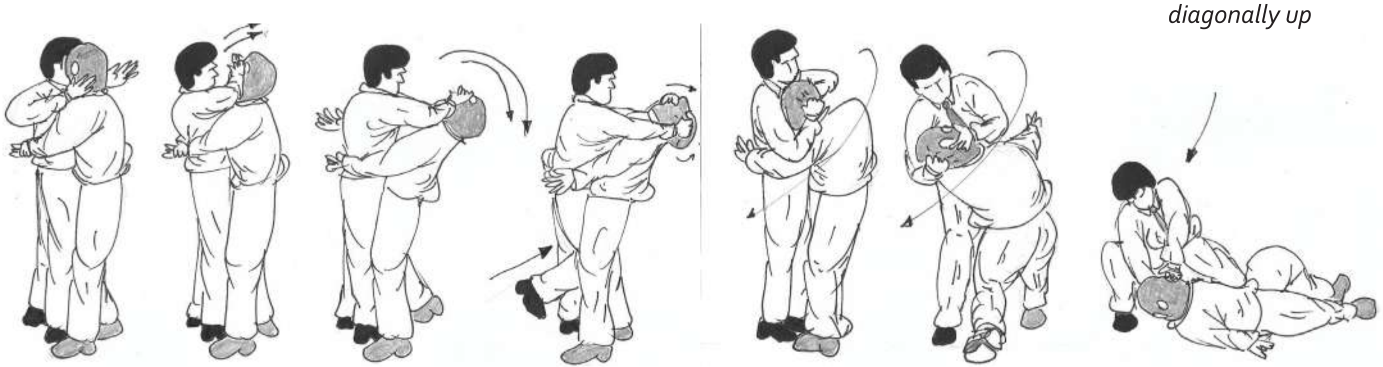


In very serious situations, simply press his eyeballs with both thumbs

A similar but ***slightly milder*** way to deal with the hugging attack is presented in the Drawings below. Instead of pressing the eyeballs, you will *press up the cartilage below his nose* and push his head back and then down. Use both your hands and place them on and below his nose, with one finger joint on the upper lip just below the nose. Push the cartilage violently up to force his head back. If you try to do that by pushing his chin, he will be able to resist by using his neck muscles; pressing the nose up solves this problem. Use both hands and the fingers under the nose to push his head back and down (in an arc) until he releases his hold. You then grab his ear or his hair with one hand, while keeping the pressure under the nose with the other. Twist his head down all the way to the floor, and Palm Strike it to slam it, again, into the ground.



The Nose lower cartilage: push diagonally up

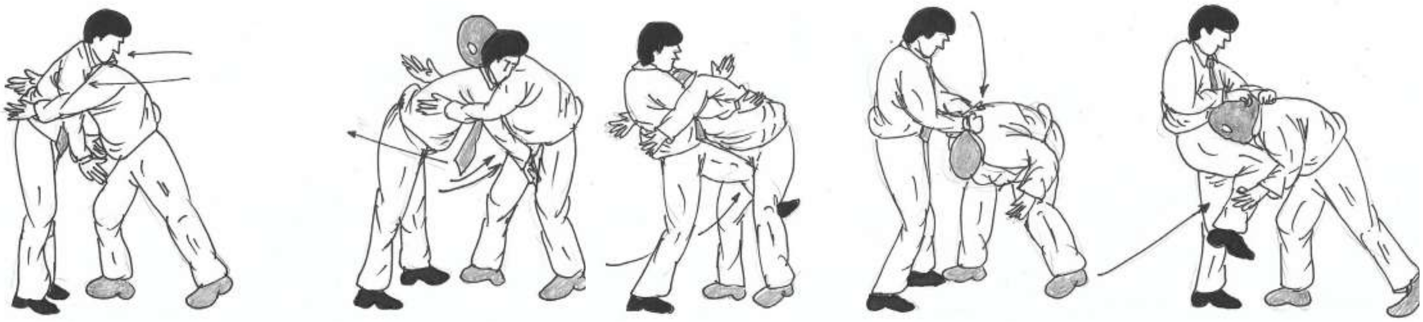


Less potentially crippling: Release by Upward Nose Push, followed by a Head Twisting Takedown

b. Hands-caught Bear hug from the Front

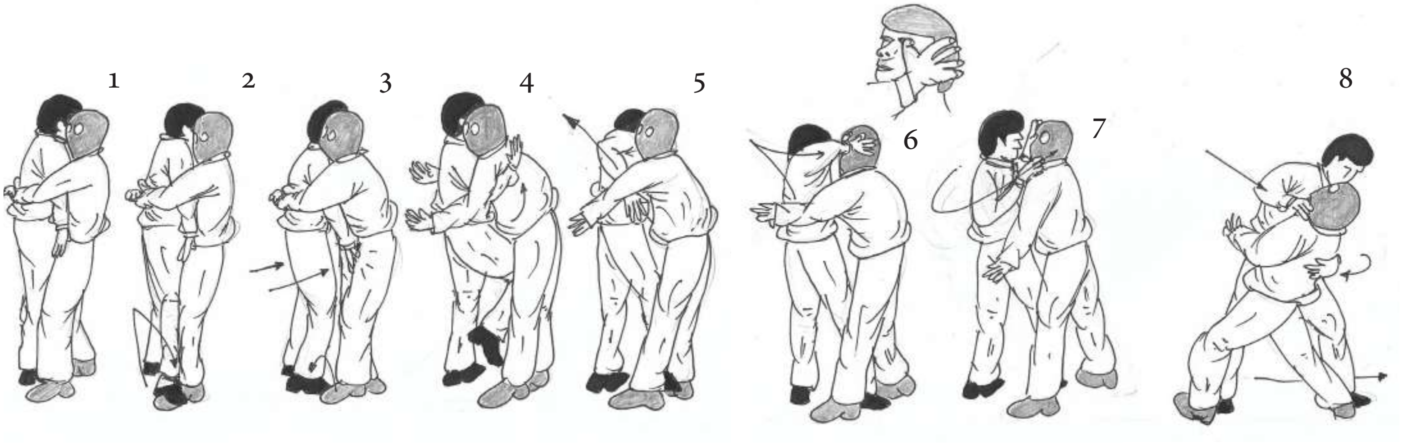
If your ***arms are caught under the bear hug***, you are in the same danger as before: he could be waiting for an accomplice, he could be already kneeing you or head-butting you, or he is planning the same kind of Takedown that we have presented before. But, this time, *you do not have your hands free for a fast and crippling reaction*. His hands are not free, but neither are yours. You should have preempted this one…
React as fast and as early as possible, place your head outside his in order to avoid a headbutt, and strive to keep your testicles safe.

If you can react before he claps on the hold, go back with your hips and slap his groin with both hands. If you have little room for maneuver, slap as much as you can ***and grab***. That should stop the attempted hold. You have pulled back the hips for protection and to make room for the groin slap. You can now use the range created for a Groin Kick. Lift and open your arms to fully free them and hammer-fist the back of his neck presented, as he bends in pain. Keep his face down and knee it. See Drawings below.

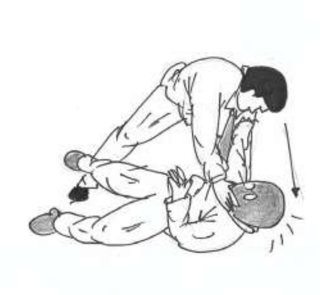


React as soon as possible: pull your hips back and slap his groin

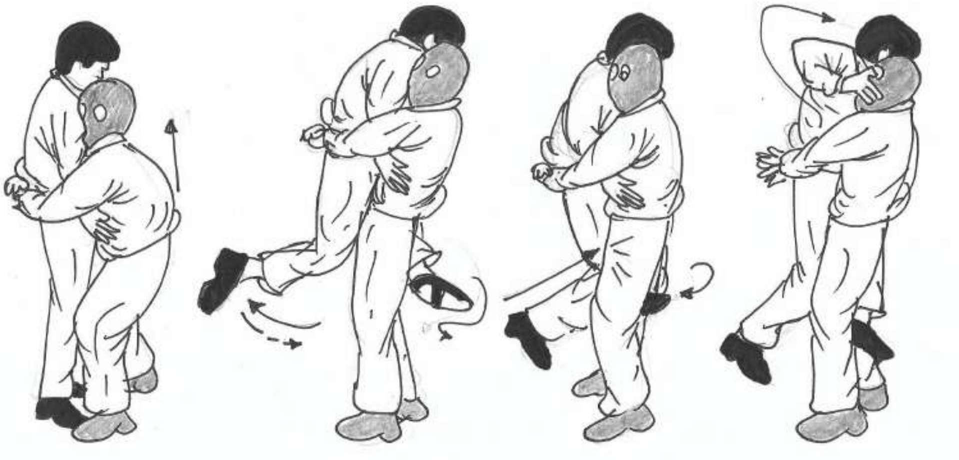
If the assailant has already secured a strong hold, ***stomp*** his foot immediately. Strike with the heel, *all the way through, and target the toes or the ankle*. The purpose of the stomp is (1) to interrupt the attacker's plan, (2) to inflict pain and (3) to create a diversion. Use the reaction to the Stomp to slide your hands in between the two bodies and ***grab his groin*** forcefully. As he instinctively pulls his hips, knee his groin and lift your arms to create some space. Pull one arm out of his grip and immediately place the thumb of the freed hand on his ocular globe, as illustrated at the top of next page (*on an unmasked opponent)*. You could bring him down with pressure on the eye(s) like in the previous section, but we propose another finish here. You'll instinctively use what goes best for you. *After thumbing his eye to obtain full release, you can catch his trachea*. You can place the other hand on his face near the eyes as well. Squeeze his trachea while pushing it back and down. You step simultaneously deep forward and move the other hand to his lower back (to help 'break' his posture). ***Keep the trachea squeeze all the way down*** and slam his head into the ground.



Stomp his foot to allow for slipping your hands towards his groin; then thumb his eye and follow up



To conclude this section, we shall present a set of Drawings illustrating what to do if you are caught in a Front Bear Hug ***and immediately lifted off your feet.*** This is probably the prelude to slamming you down. You should *immediately hook one foot behind his leg*, from the outside; try to hook into the back of the knee, to avoid being lifted higher and to 'root' you for the coming Knee Strike. You other leg has in fact been taking some range for a Knee Strike to his groin as powerful as possible. Use the commotion to pull out one arm and thumb his eye. From there you can start your own Retzev, based on those of this and the previous section...



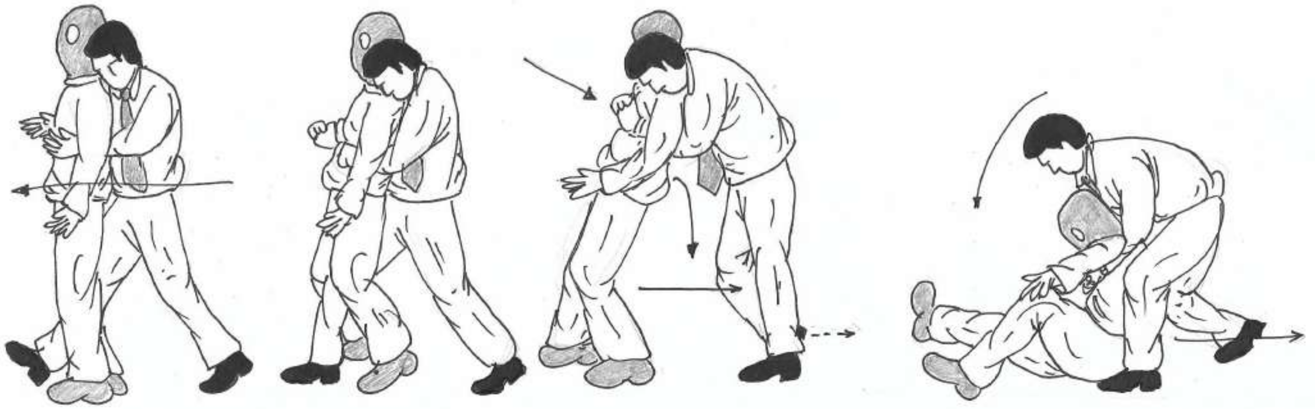
If lifted in a Front Bear Hug, hook behind one of his legs and knee his groin, before thumbing his eye

6.2 Bear Hug from the Back

One cannot be blamed for having been caught in a Bear Hug from the back. One should always be vigilant and aware of his surroundings, but an aggressor has the advantage of planning, of surprise and of taking the initiative. Still, trust your gut if your 6th sense gives you a weird feeling of unease, and increase vigilance. Do not hesitate to change path, to stop or retrace your steps if anything looks wrong: there is no shame in it, whatsoever.
All this is to remind the reader that preempting a surprise attack from the rear is pretty difficult. Again, immediate reaction is required!
Just like for the previous section, we shall divide this one in the handling of the hands-free and the hands-caught versions of the Hug.

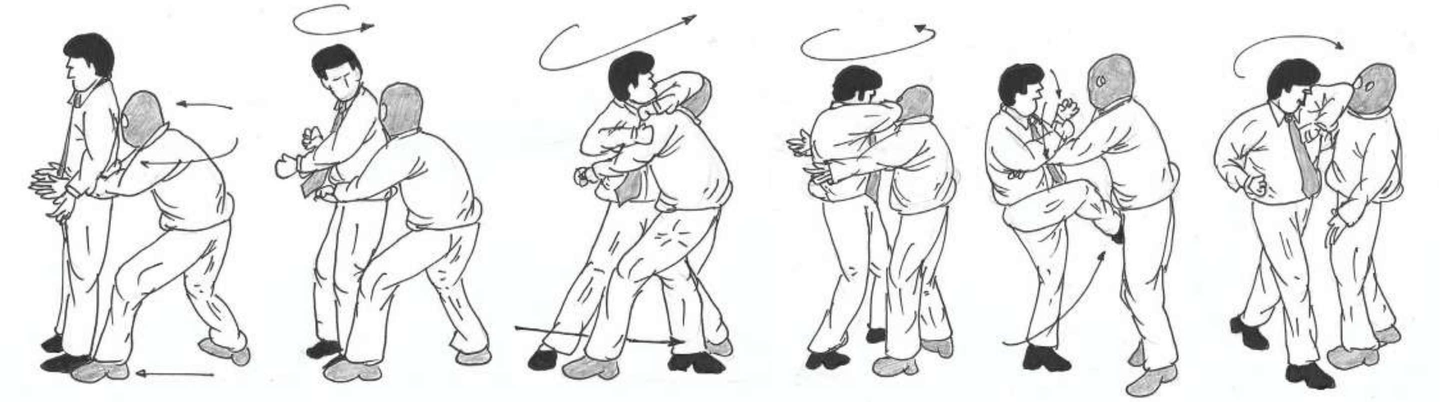
a. Hands-free Bear Hug from the Back

We shall start by illustrating the way to execute a Bear Hug from the Back, *if we were the attacker*. This is to show that a Bear Hug is a dynamic attack with a purpose, and to underline how important is the immediate reaction. Someone who gets you in a Bear Hug and does nothing is not an experienced fighter, even if he waits for an accomplice, he should be at least shaking you around. The Bear Hug from the Back is simply a Takedown: you slam into the opponent while setting your hold in order to take his center of gravity and to cause him to react by pushing back. As he does, you pull him back and down with your whole body. That's it! Wham Bam! No fiddling around.



The realistic use of the Rear Bear Hug

If you can react ***before the attacker can clinch the hold***, you should react as illustrated by the coming Drawings. Immediately pivot towards the assailant, and step forcefully between his legs while executing a very natural but *hips-powered* Circular Rear Elbow Strike. The step is very important and has the following purposes: (1) to strike his groin area with your upper thigh, (2) to bring you close to his axis (neutralizes the hold), and (3) to power the Elbow Strike. The Elbow Strike must go *through* his head: it is not a contact slap. Follow-up with a naturally-following Circular Front Elbow Strike to the side of his head. Keep the *Retzev* going, for example with a Ghost Groin Kick and another Elbow Strike.

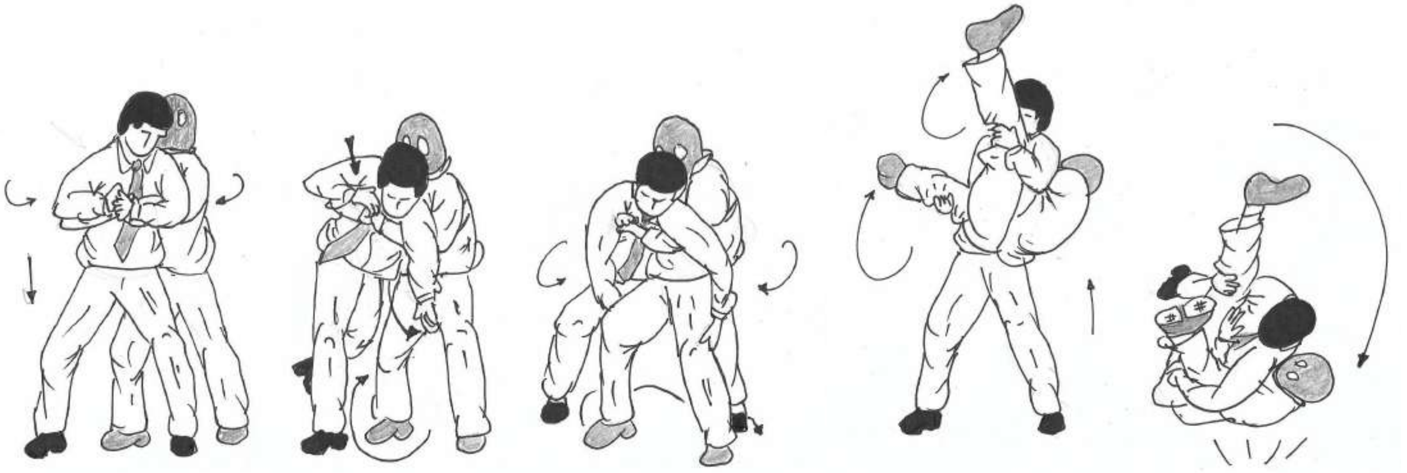


If you detect the attack before the hold is set, pivot immediately and step into him with an Elbow Strike

If you are a good ground-fighter and if you are sure that your assailant is alone, you can try the following technique. It is the 'Sacrifice' version of a classic Takedown, especially suitable for use against this hold. As soon as you detect the attack, clasp his hands so as to not let him go. Pull a leg and bring it behind him together with your hips. You do that *explosively* while letting some of your weight on his grip. Simultaneously, you slap his groin with the close hand. As soon as you are in position, with your lower body behind his legs, let go of the other hand as well and grab the back of both his knees. In order for the maneuver to be effective, you need to have your hips *lower* than his center of gravity and *use them to tip him over*. Lift both his knees as high as possible while straightening the legs and the trunk. Up to this point, we have described the classic *Sukui Nage*-type Takedown as it is usually executed. You simply throw the opponent to the ground from where you have lifted him. We shall illustrate this classic Throw in the next section (hands-caught bear Hug from the Back).

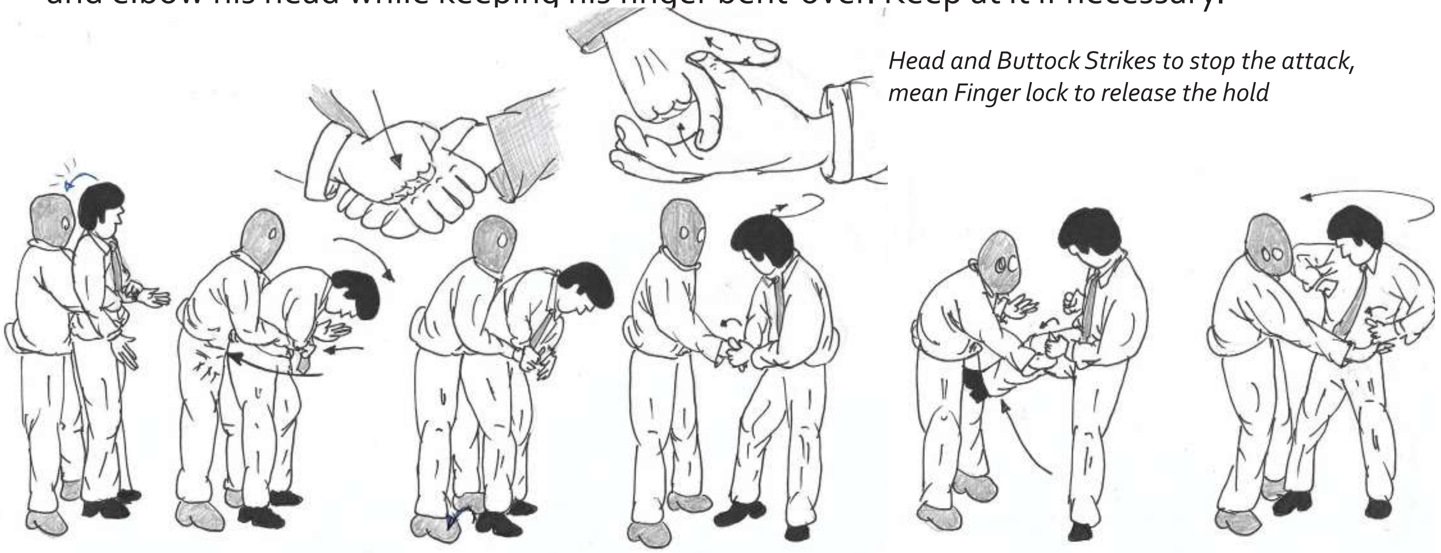
In this example, we shall throw the opponent towards the ground, head first, but we shall accompany him. Fall on top of him as he slams into the floor *for a more damaging fall*. Follow up on the ground. This is a very damaging technique, recommended if the circumstances are suitable (See top of next page). Of course, if you are a mediocre ground-fighter, or if the assailant has accomplices around, just execute the classic standing Takedown.

➡



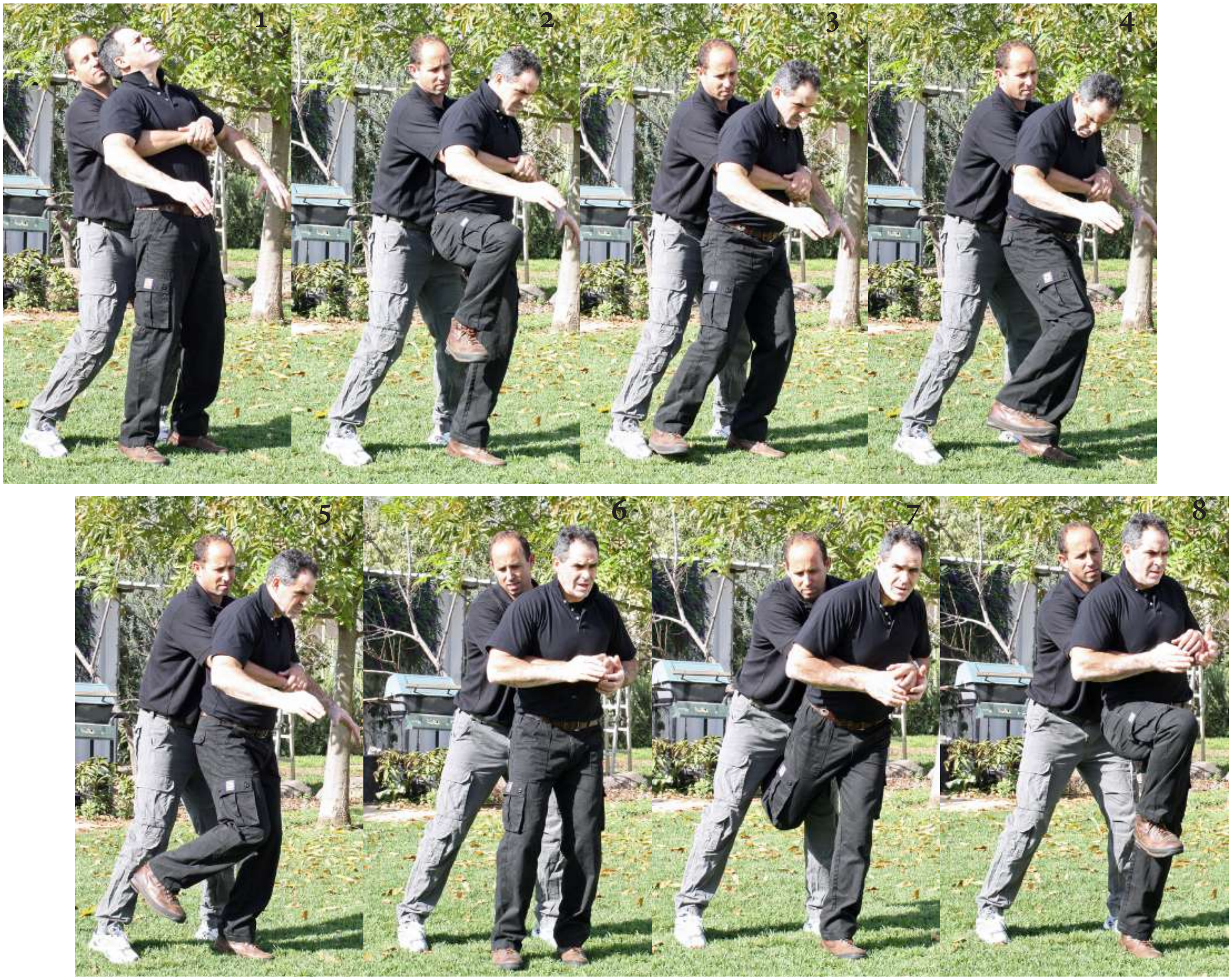
Crushing Sacrifice Takedown against a Hands-free Bear hug from the Rear

And now, we shall present the *classic* release from the hug ***once it has been clinched***. Immediately hit him in the groin area with your buttocks, while bending forward. The bending is to make yourself heavy for a lift or a pull. The *Buttocks Strike* is much more effective than it may seem; just make sure it is explosive and powerful. [If your assailant has started pulling you back, all that must be preceded by a *Rear Head Strike*, hoping that the assailant has not taken the precaution of placing his head besides yours]. As soon as you have hit him with your glutes, use the knuckles of one fist to strike the back of his upper clasping hand. The purpose is to cause pain in order to help your other hand to peel off one of his fingers. *Use all fingers and concentrate on grabbing one finger only.* Do not try to unlock the grasp of his whole hand, one finger is enough and much easier. Once you have his finger, bend it over forcefully and violently. If the Knuckle Strike has not been enough, you should seamlessly stomp one of his feet before proceeding to the finger grab; or you can stomp in any case just to be sure. Pivot towards him and keep the Finger Lock set in your fist. Lift your leg directly into his groin as you now face him, and elbow his head while keeping his finger bent-over. Keep at it if necessary.



Head and Buttock Strikes to stop the attack, mean Finger lock to release the hold

If you are more of a striker, then the '**attrition**' release presented in the coming Photos is better for you. You shall hit him all over until he releases you, and then you can start your following *Retzev*. Start with an immediate Back Headbutt and a foot Stomp. A Hooking Heel Back Kick to the shin should rattle him more. By then he should have pulled back and given you enough space for a Hooking Groin Back Kick. Notice the orthodox delivery: once you have struck into the groin, hook back forward for additional damage. Please note that it could be necessary to alternate the sides you attack if the assailant moves sideways to reaction to your hits.

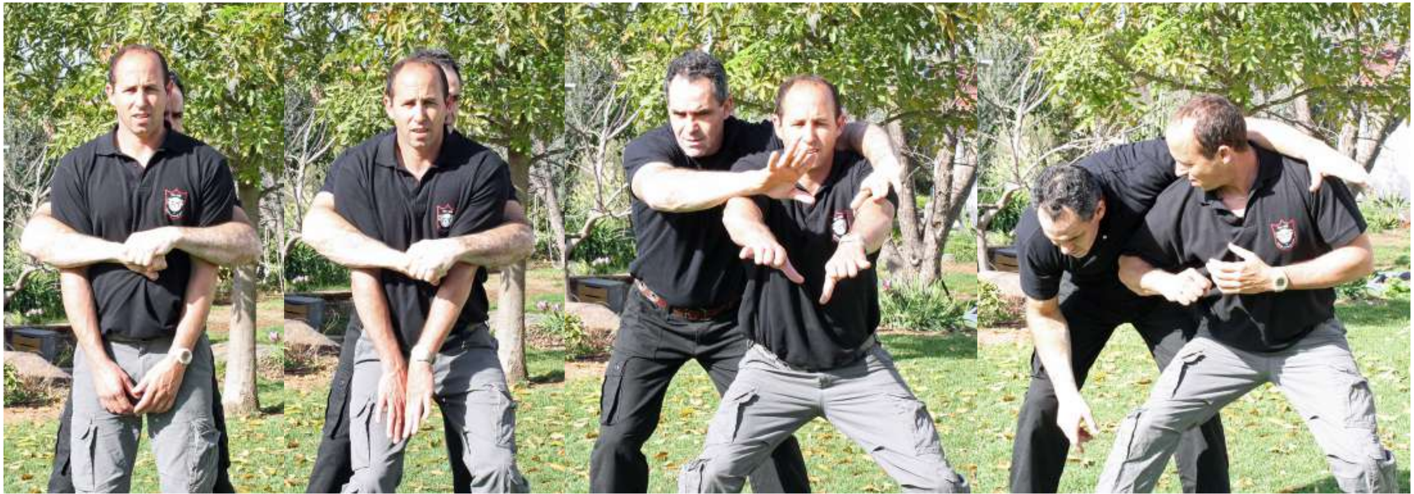


Keep hitting the attacker with the head and the feet, until he releases you

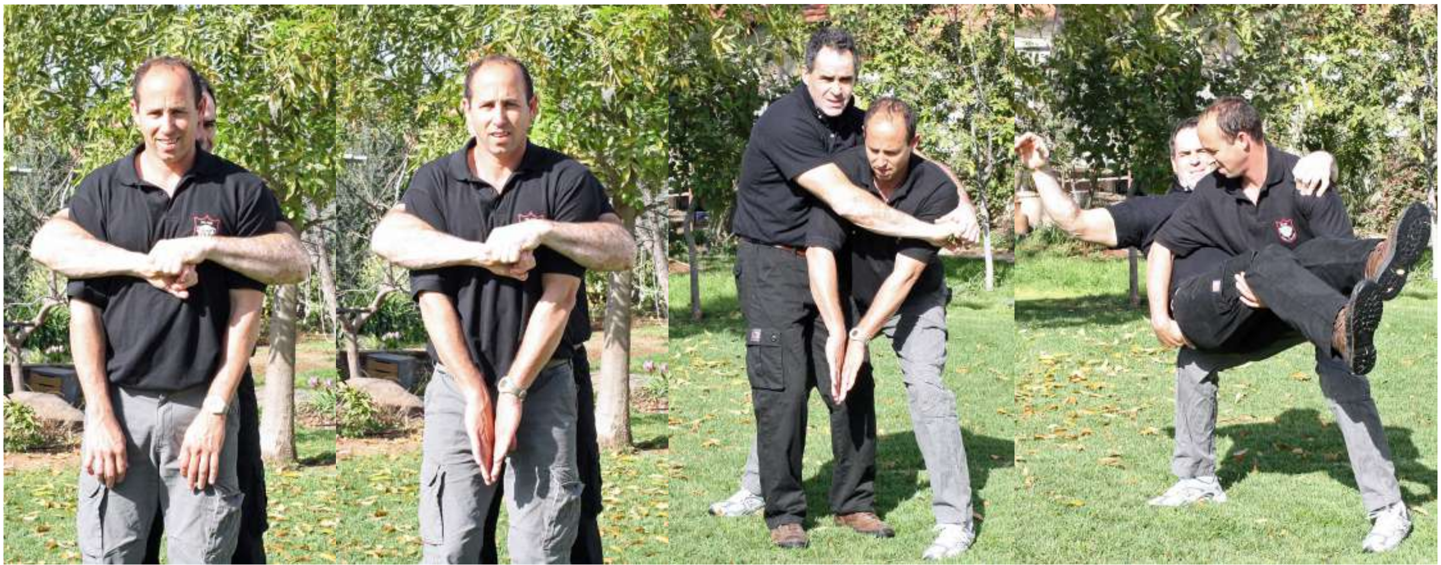
b. Hands-caught Bear Hug from the Back

All the principles already covered in Bear Hug defenses stay relevant for this section. ***Your arms are now caught under the hold*** and you will be able to release them only after adequate 'softening' of the assailant. The best method to release the weakened hold is presented in the coming two sets of Photos: you twist the arms in order to place the back of your hands together and then you lift them violently while straightening them. The *first* set of Photos is a simple 'Release and elbow'.

The *second* example is the release followed by the standing version of the *Double Leg Lift Takedown* already encountered above. Note that, unless executed very early in the hugging attempt, both series should be preceded by 'softening' strikes and followed by an aggressive *Retzev*.



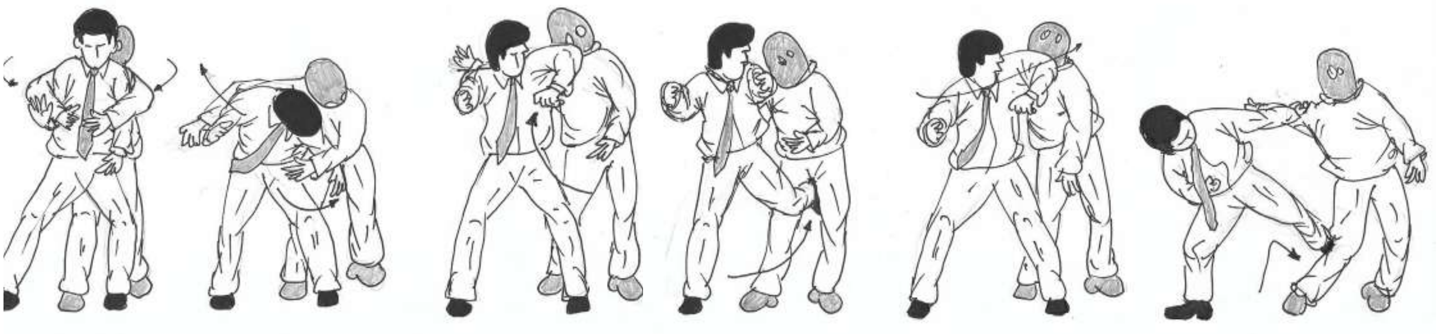
The arms-release technique and a Back Elbow Strike to the solar plexus



The release leading to the Double Leg lift Takedown

Once this is acquired, let us see how to ***fully*** handle the attack.

The Illustrations below show how to react if you have detected the attack and can start your defense ***before the assailant can clasp hands***: immediately lift your forearms and step aside. This will give you room for a Hand Strike to the *groin* (Palm or Knife-hand). From the Groin Strike, you directly lift the elbow into his face (that is coming down). Both strikes, to the groin and to the face are powerful 'strike-through' hits. From there, you'll start your follow-up series; for example: a Hooking Upward Back Kick to the groin, another Elbow Strike to the face and a Stomping Side kick to the side of his knee.

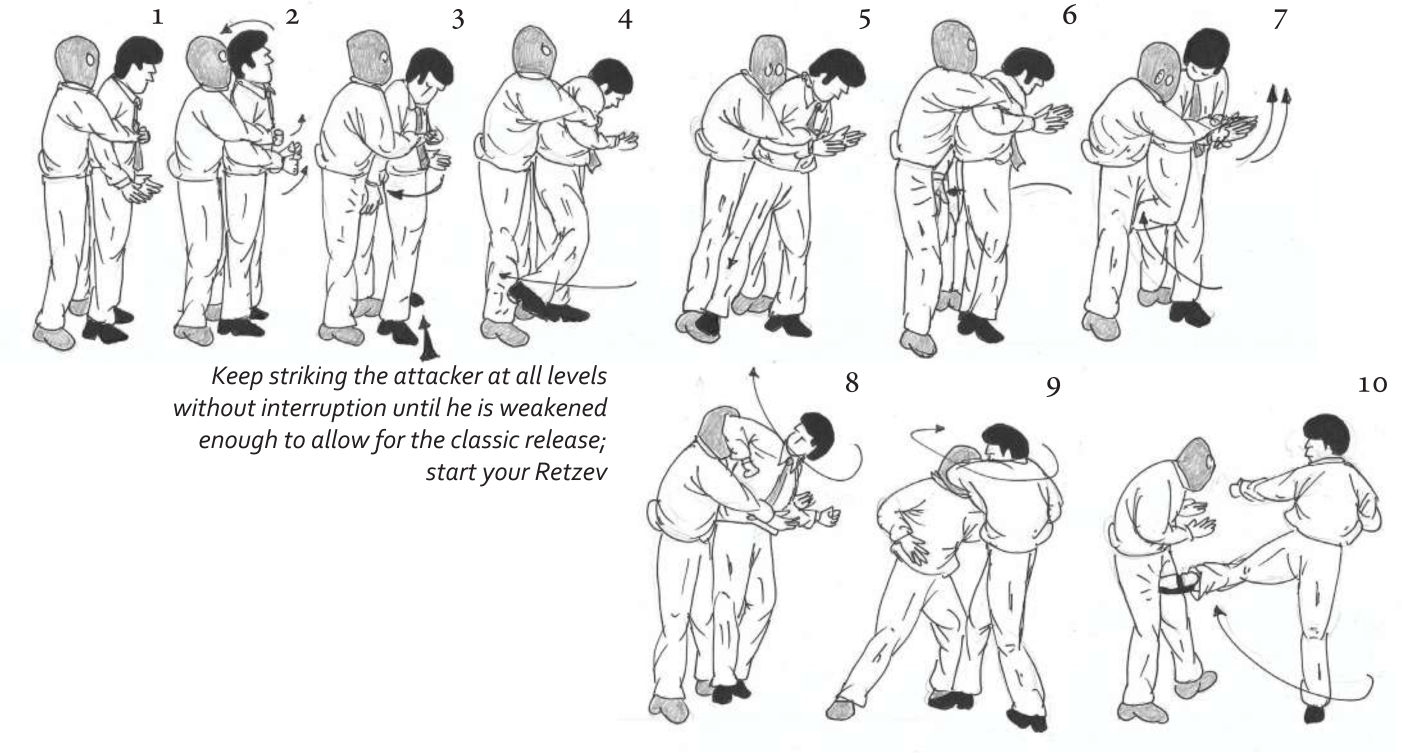


If you can react to the hugging early enough, step aside to hit his groin with your hand

Once the Bear Hug is set, it is better to adopt an *attrition* strategy: strike the assailant until his hold weakens and then execute the release described at the beginning of the section. We shall present a possible series of strikes, but it will in fact depend on your affinities and on the reactions of the attacker. There are a few principles to respect: (1) strike through and explosively, (2) alternate the height of your strikes to overwhelm him and prevent his initiatives, and (3) alternate sides you use to strike. If you slap his groin with your left hand or stomp his left foot, it is highly probable that he will move to the right, instinctively and to avoid further hits. You have then to make use of his reaction and to hit him from your right side, to the groin or lower legs that he is moving there. It is pretty simple but requires training and drilling.

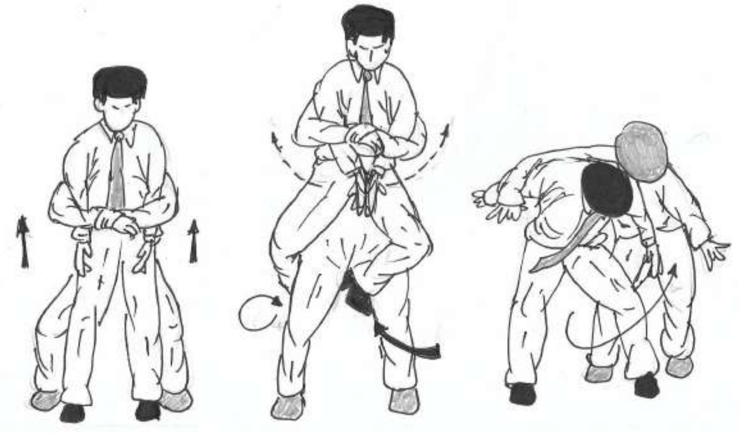
In the example illustrated at the top of next page, you *headbutt* his nose as soon as he clasps over your arms. Immediately move slightly sideways to hit (or grab) his *groin* with your hand. Follow up with Donkey Back Kicks to the shin, Stomps, more Hand-strikes to the groin. You can execute a Hooking Upward Back Kick on one side after having hand-struck him in the groin from the other side to cause him to move. This should have weakened his hold and given you enough room to execute the release. Strike his head with the elbow of one arm being released, follow up with another Elbow Strike and a Groin Kick.

➔



Keep striking the attacker at all levels without interruption until he is weakened enough to allow for the classic release; start your Retzev

We shall conclude this section by dealing, again, with the case in which the assailant ***starts to lift you up immediately as he sets the hold***. Needless to mention that you'll be slammed to the floor if you do not react at once. You should hook behind his leg with one leg, to avoid being lifted too high, and you simultaneously kick his groin with the other in *Hooking Donkey Back Kick style.* Kick hard and into the groin, with everything you have got. You should then join your hands for the classic release while you land back down. Follow up with any of the grounded techniques presented above according to the circumstances. We have illustrated here a Knife-hand Strike to the groin. Keep the *Retzev* going.



If lifted in rear Bear Hug, hook one leg behind his and hook the other heel forcefully into his groin

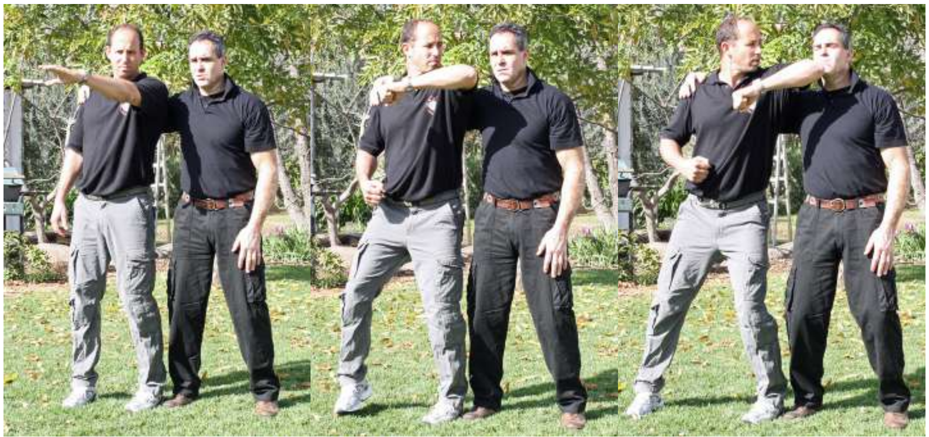
Do not fear going forward slowly; fear only to stand still.
~Chinese Proverb

6.3 Side Headlock

A Side headlock is a very bad situation to find yourself in. You should react early to avoid the lock, and we shall give a few examples. If caught, react immediately and violently, because an experienced opponent will not linger but take you the ground and/or twist your vertebrae in a very dangerous Neck-lock. He could also release one hand to punch you in the still immobilized face. And remember that your assailant could have an accomplice around…

So the best approach is, again, offensive preemption. If it is becoming clear that somebody is about to attack you, forget your social graces and stop him in his tracks. This is even truer if a potential assailant comes too close for comfort, even if he is not attacking yet. Do not let your polite and considerate upbringing stop you from reacting just because the other guy is sweet-talking you. The sets of Photos below illustrate a few possible reactions to someone coming from the side and placing his arm on your shoulders or around your neck. Female readers can easily identify with such an aggression: touching you or invading your personal space is an aggression and can lead to much more than that. Do not tolerate it!

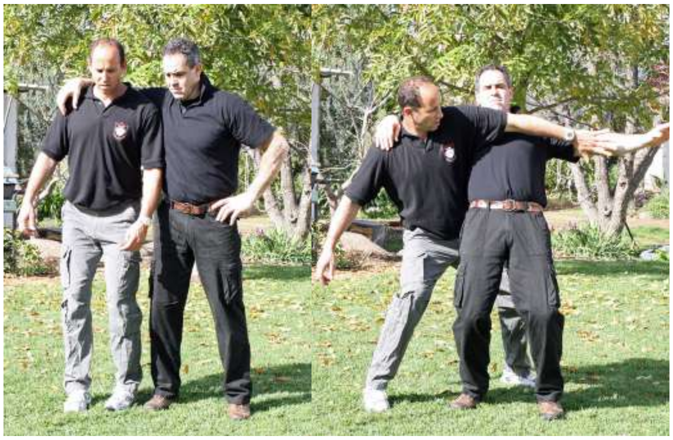
1



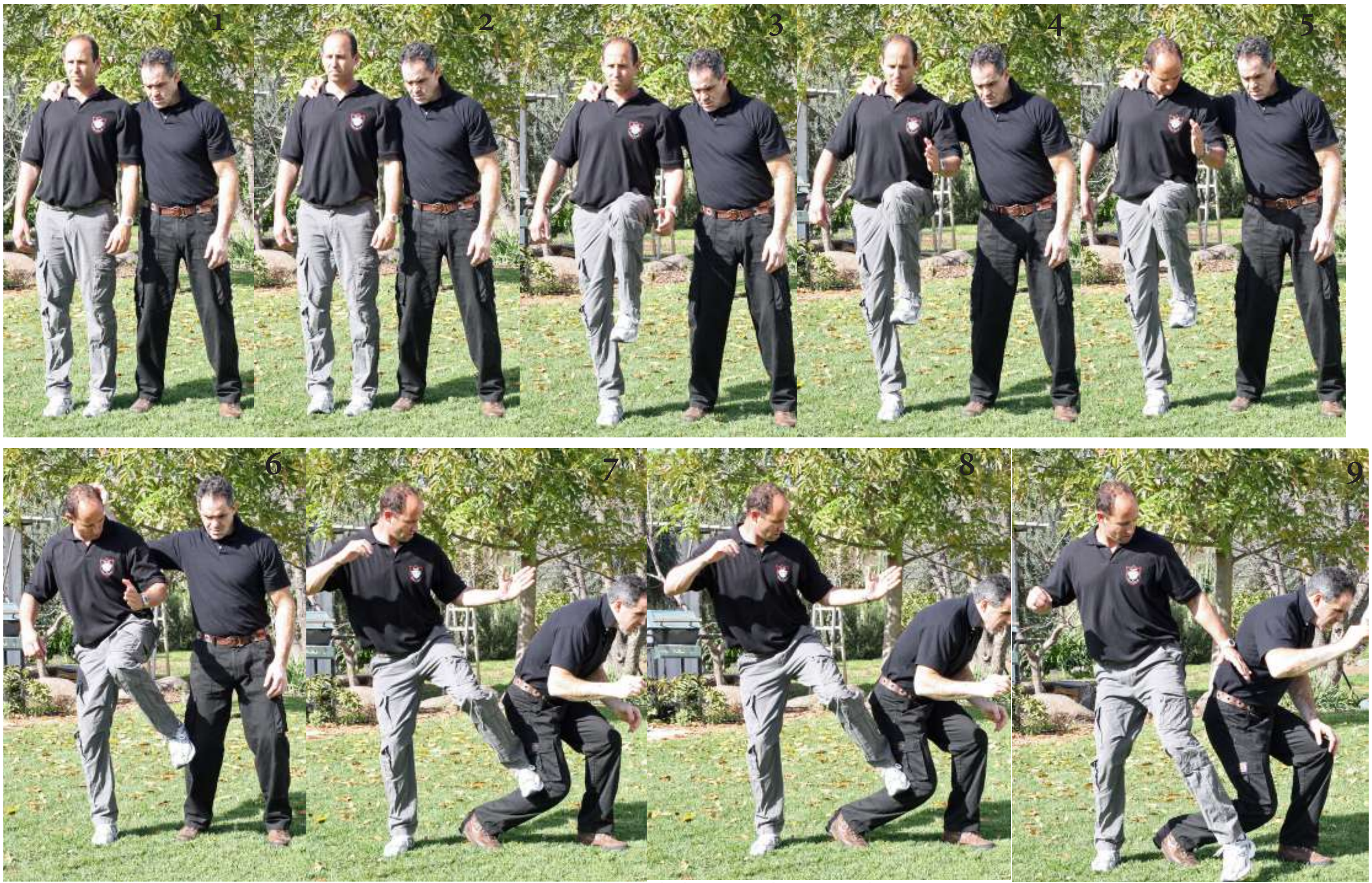
React early and elbow the face of the assailant,…

In the first example, you simply side-elbow the *nose* (center of the face) of the attacker; in the second example, you take him down with a Tilting Hip Throw; and in the third you stomp-side-kick his knee.

2

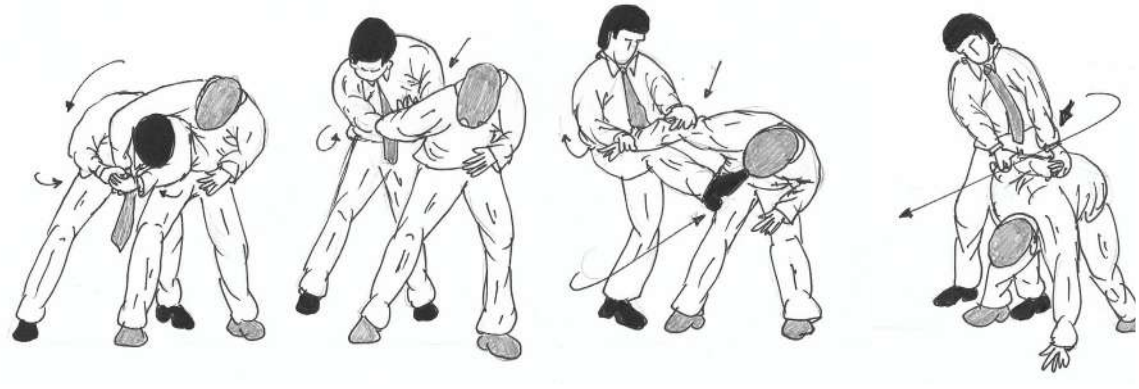


…or take him down over your upper thighs



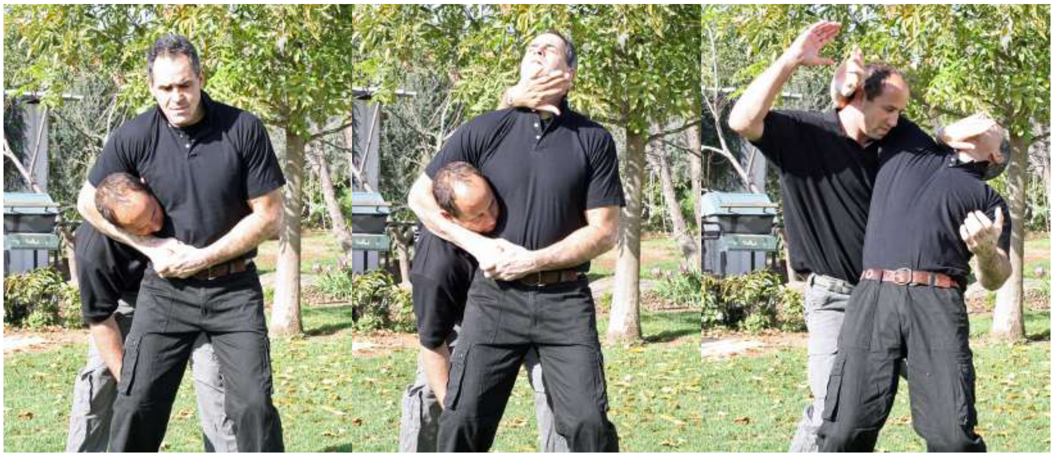
...or crush his side knee to the ground

The next step is to try to react ***before the assailant can clasp the lock shut***. The set of Illustrations below shows how to catch the hand of the opponent (the one going over your neck). In that case, you should not resist the downward pressure, but go with it until you have a firm grab. You then go down and rearwards to evade the lock while twisting his arm in a classic Armlock. Remember that, in basic *Krav Maga*, an Arm-lock is an attack executed violently: twist brusquely and strike his elbow with force. Kick his face as he is driven down by the lock. You can then keep at it, for example by twisting his arm in his back and then pushing him down and forward with the locked arms and with your hips.



Grab the hand encircling your neck before it can clasp and evade into a classic Arm-lock

Once the Lock is set, the situation requires hitting vulnerable points in order to weaken the assailant's hold. You have two options, and the good news is that it will be difficult for the opponent to guard both targets simultaneously. The first target is the ***groin***, like usual, that can be struck and/or grabbed with your outer hand, as will be illustrated a few times in the coming full Releases. The other general target is the ***head***, that can be reached with your inner hand; you should aim at striking and pressing the *eyes* or the *throat*. You should try to strike both areas when possible, but can start drilling as illustrated by the Photos.

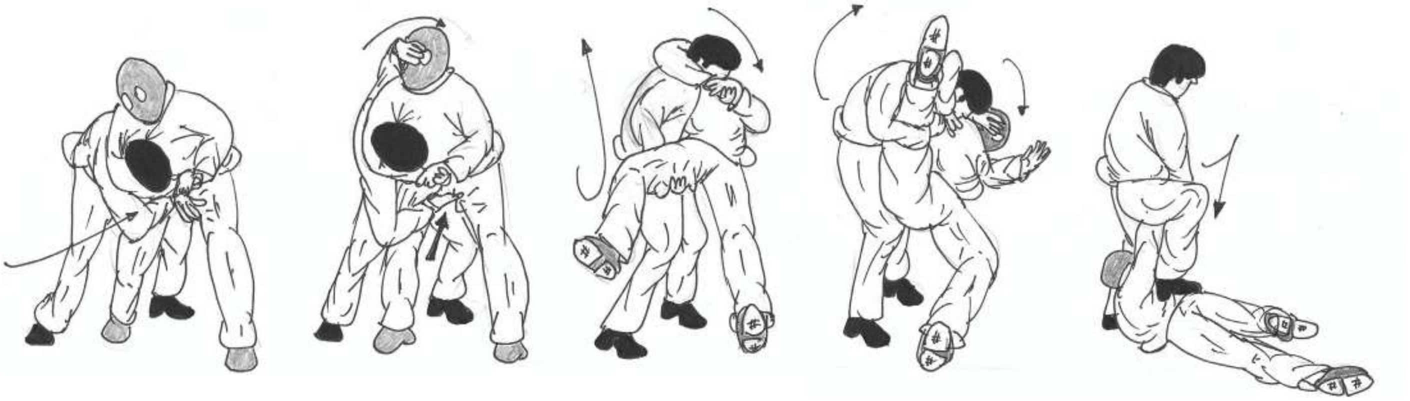


Drill attacking the throat, then push it down to release the hold; Keep striking, preferably the throat or the groin

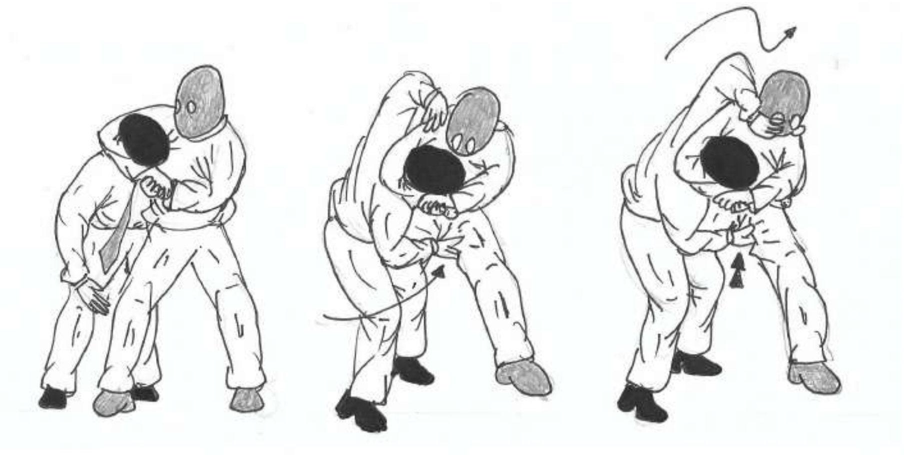
If the confrontation is serious, attacking the eyes is better than attacking the throat

Now, ***let us put it all together*** in the following set of Drawings. When head-locked, slap his *groin* immediately. Then grab it while going for the eyes with the other hand. Push his head back by pressing his *eyeballs*, and use the 'groin hand' to lift the leg close to you. Lift as high as possible while pushing his head down. As he releases your neck, try to keep control of his arm. Once he is on the ground, pull his arm up while stomp-kicking his floating ribs.

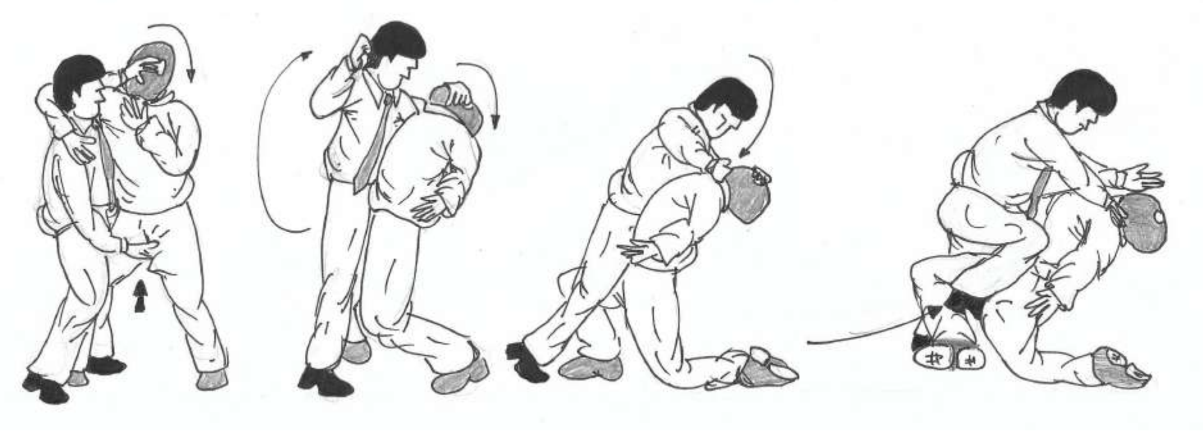
Slap-grab the groin, rake/press the eyes, take him down and stomp his ribs



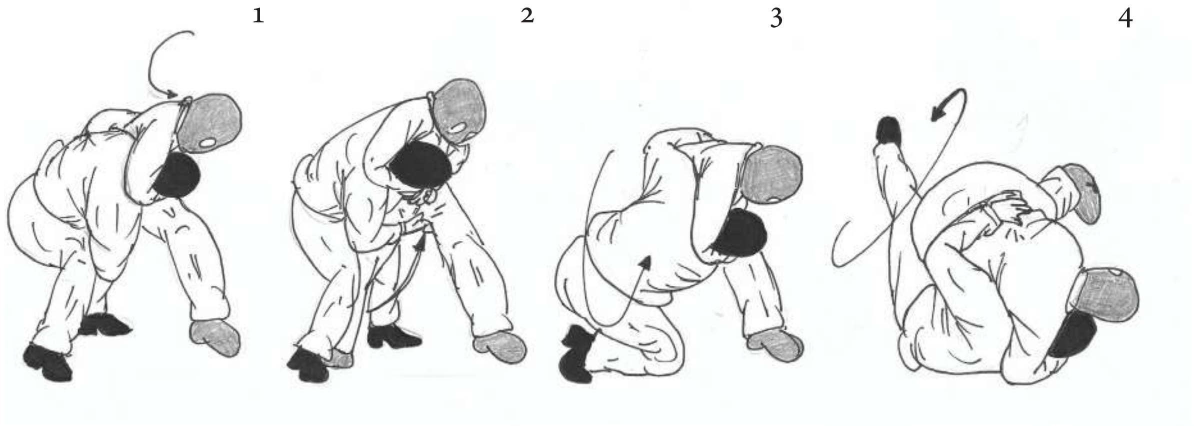
Another way to finish the release, after the groin and eyes attack, is presented here. Immediately strike and grab his groin and go for the eyes. Twist the grabbed testicles while pressing on the eyeballs until he releases the lock. Push his head back by pressing the eyes, in order to uncover his throat. Strike the throat with a Knife-hand or a Hammer-fist Strike and kick his groin while pushing him back all the way to the floor.



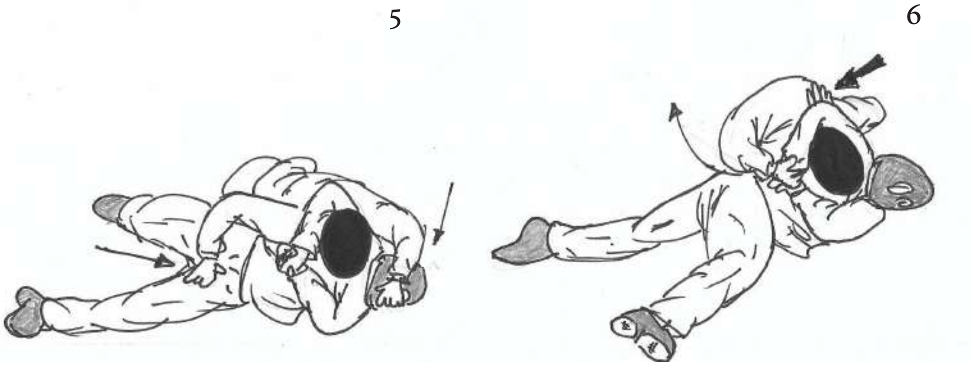
Another redoubtable finish to the classic release



In some cases, the opponent locks your neck and immediately starts twisting with the probable purpose of ***taking you to the ground***. Slap his groin. But, in that case, you should not resist, or better you should give him a spike of resistance in order to cause him to push down even more forcefully. Then, following the principle of letting him slam the unlocked door, you throw yourself to the floor while twisting. By surprising him so you get control of going to the ground and you get helped by his own push. And do not forget to keep your slapping 'groin hand' grabbing his testicles; that will definitely help! After a full Roll, you should end up over him. If he has not released you yet, let your 'grabbing' hand let go but come back at once to hit the groin again. Your other forearm his slamming into the side of his head, and you rake his eyes as you lift the arm back. The 'groin' hand grabs his *fingers* and the 'eyes' hand pushes his elbow forward as you pull your head out. See Illustrations at the top of next page.



If the assailant tries to twist you down to the ground, take the initiative and dive down; attack eyes and groin for the release



6.7. Defenses against Chokes

Make no mistake, a ***choke*** is a lethal attack and should be treated as such. It is as dangerous as being threatened with a knife. It is fiendishly easy to crush a larynx, to permanently damage a trachea, to cut blood flow to the brain or to asphyxiate someone. And it can happen very fast.

Therefore, let me repeat: act as early as possible and go for the most vulnerable targets. At once!

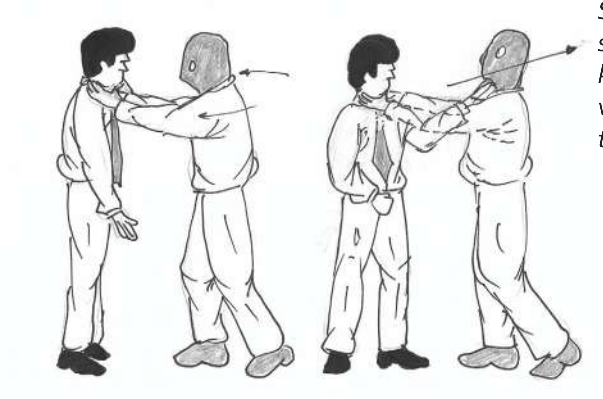
7.1 Hands Choke from the Front

The typical ***Hand Choke from the front*** would not be used by a trained opponent, but it does not mean that it is not dangerous. It is a *Respiratory Choke*, painfully cutting your oxygen intake, and also potentially damaging to the physical integrity of the larynx. React fast because the lack of oxygen will very quickly hamper your strength and your speed.

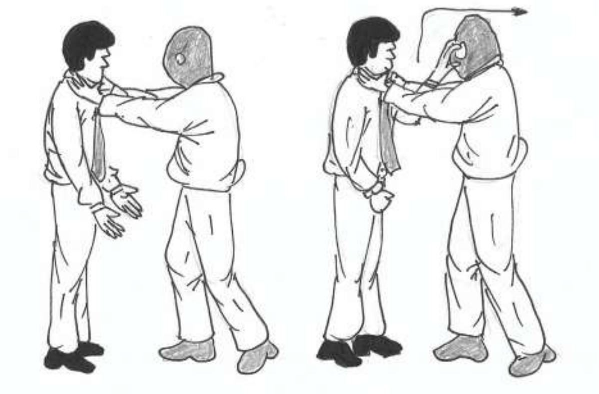
If you cannot act ***preemptively*** as the assailant approaches, you should at least be ready to strike *before he starts squeezing.*

All the release techniques that we shall present in this section should be preceded by a 'stopping' maneuver that will at least slow the setting of the grip and rattle your opponent. It can be a simple Poke to the eyes, a Poke to the throat or a Ghost Kick to the groin (illustrated in the coming Drawings). Remember that, in a high adrenalin situation, this will not necessarily stop your opponent, but it will allow you to proceed with the release techniques in better conditions.

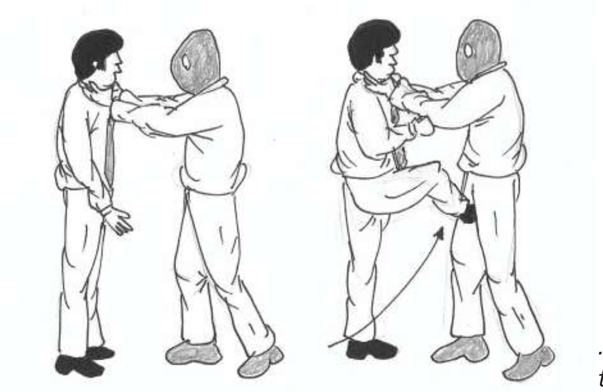
➔



Strike the assailant's throat with your straightened fingertips or with the first knuckles; note that the left arm of the victim has not been drawn for clarity of the stop-poke,

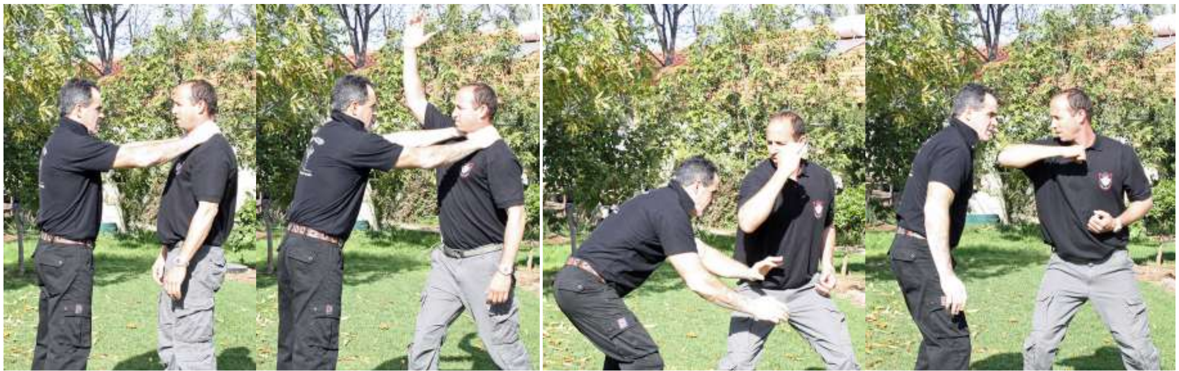


...or claw into his eyes as soon as possible in the attack,



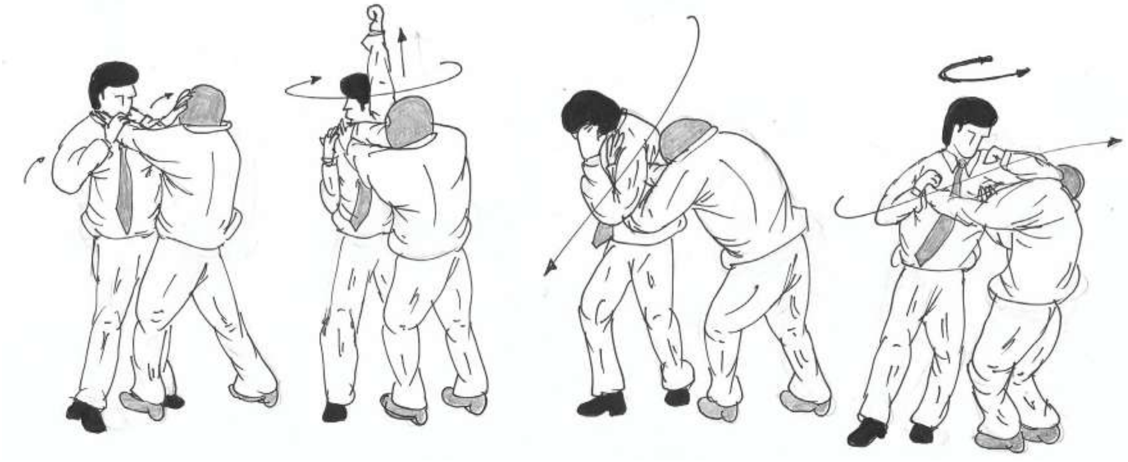
...or lift your foot directly into his testicles, in a Front Ghost Groin Kick.

Once this has been made clear, we can now present the release techniques. The *best* reactive technique is, in the author's opinion, the one we shall present first. The following Photos illustrate how you must first lower your chin, lift your shoulders and contract your neck muscles to relieve the pressure. You then lift one arm immediately, straight up and twist your upper body *violently* in the direction of the other arm. While twisting, you start a powerful *Downward Elbow Strike onto the choking arms* of the attacker. That will release the hold and place you in perfect position for a horizontal Side Elbow Strike to the face (Aim for the nose). Remember that the maneuver will work best after a destabilizing strike, and that it must be followed by a serious *Retzev* until total victory.



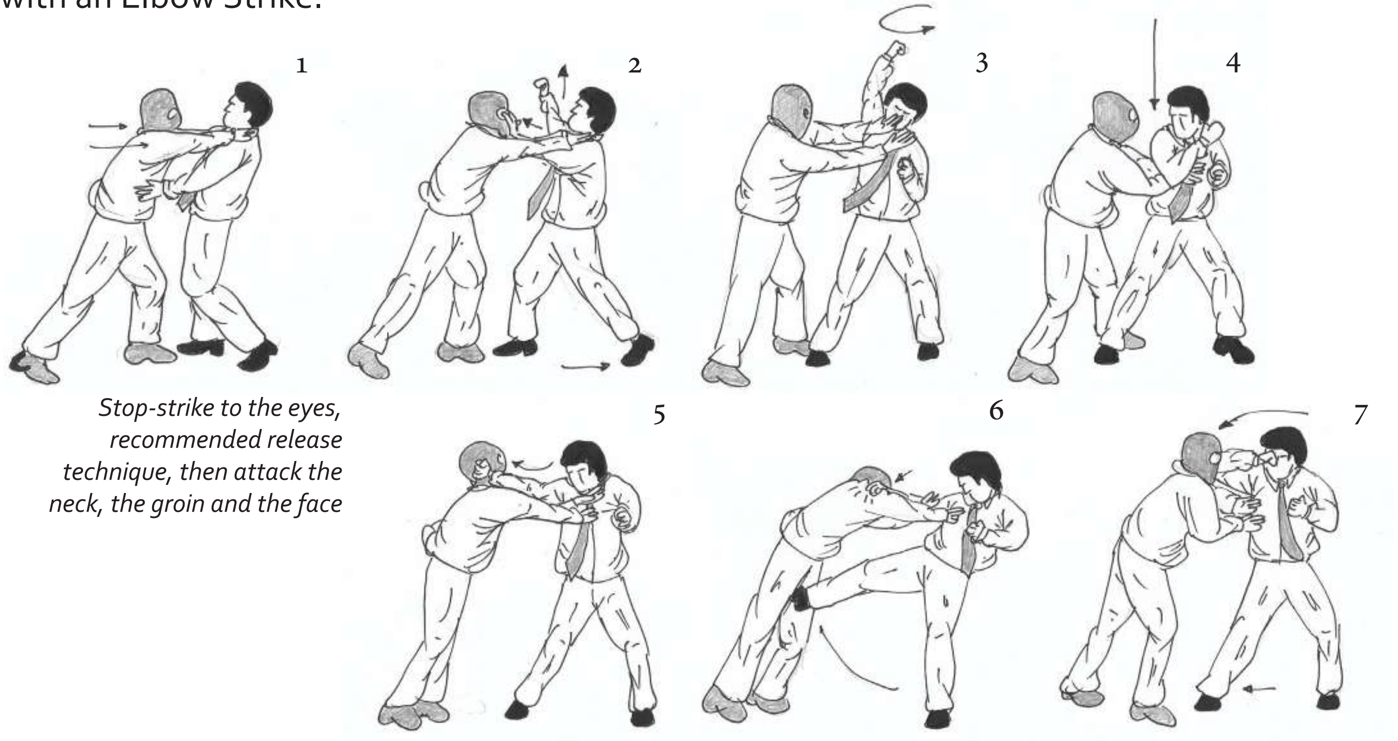
The best release: lift arm, twist, elbow down, side-elbow to counter

The keys for the success of the Release technique are (1) to lift the arm *high* in order to immobilize the choking hand between the shoulder and the neck, (2) to *twist violently* with 'seriously damaging his wrist' in mind, and (3) to *elbow down as an attack* of the joints and not as a release. The coming Illustrations try to show the amount of energy and commitment needed for this maneuver.



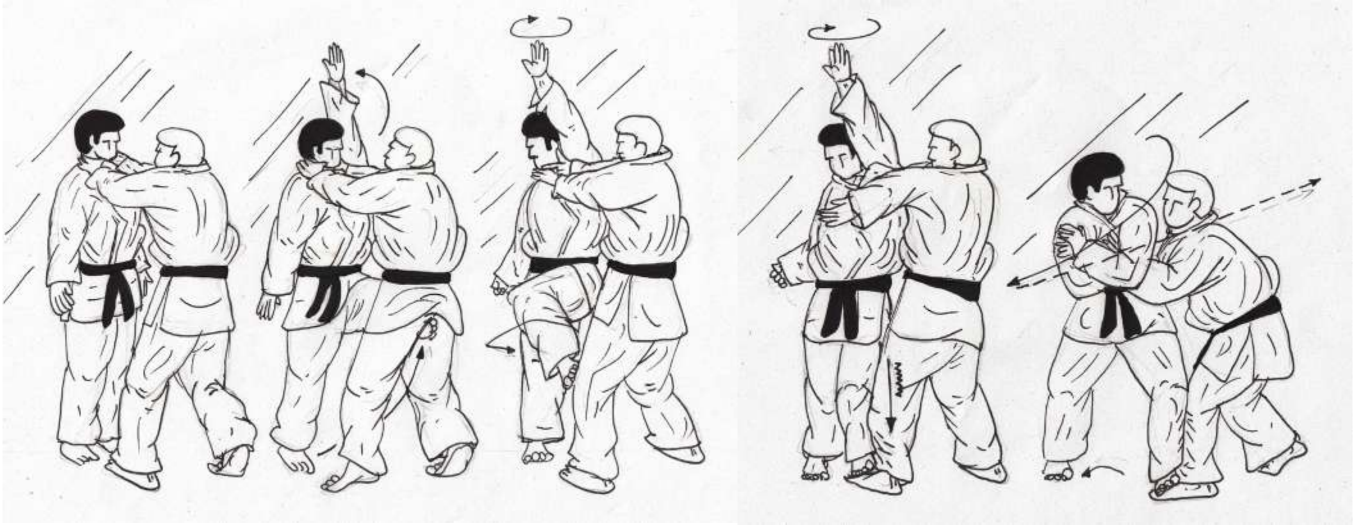
Lift the arm and twist violently, elbow down and through with everything you have, twist back with the hips for the Elbow counter

Let us now put it all together with the stopping strike and some follow-up. In the Drawings below, you can see how to go back with the momentum of the assault while tucking the chin and lifting the shoulders. You attack the eyes while lifting the other arm. Pivot violently and elbow down, whether he has already released the choke or not. Come back up with a Forearm Strike to the side of the neck. Kick his groin and follow with an Elbow Strike.



Stop-strike to the eyes, recommended release technique, then attack the neck, the groin and the face

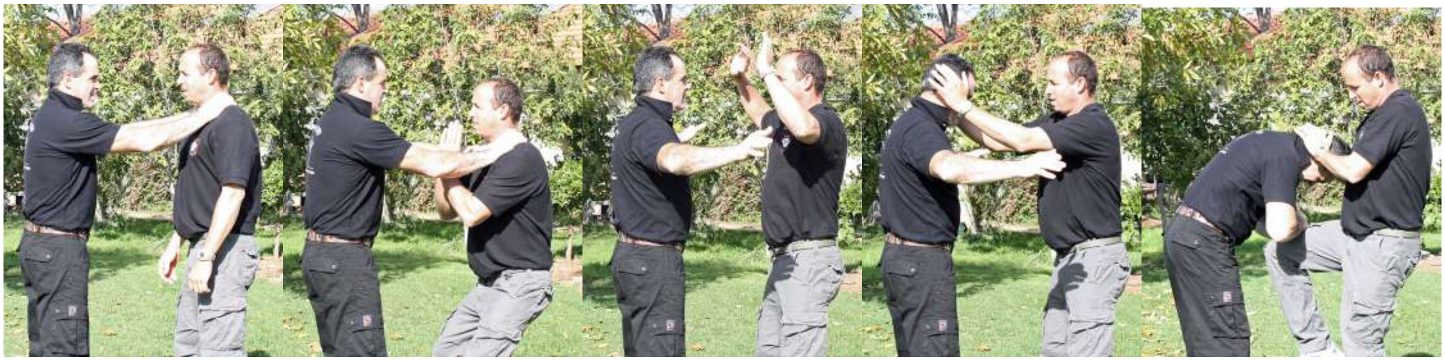
The next set of Illustrations shows the same release technique, but when backed against the wall and with a different preventive stop-strike and simultaneous kicking techniques (See '*Low Kicks*').



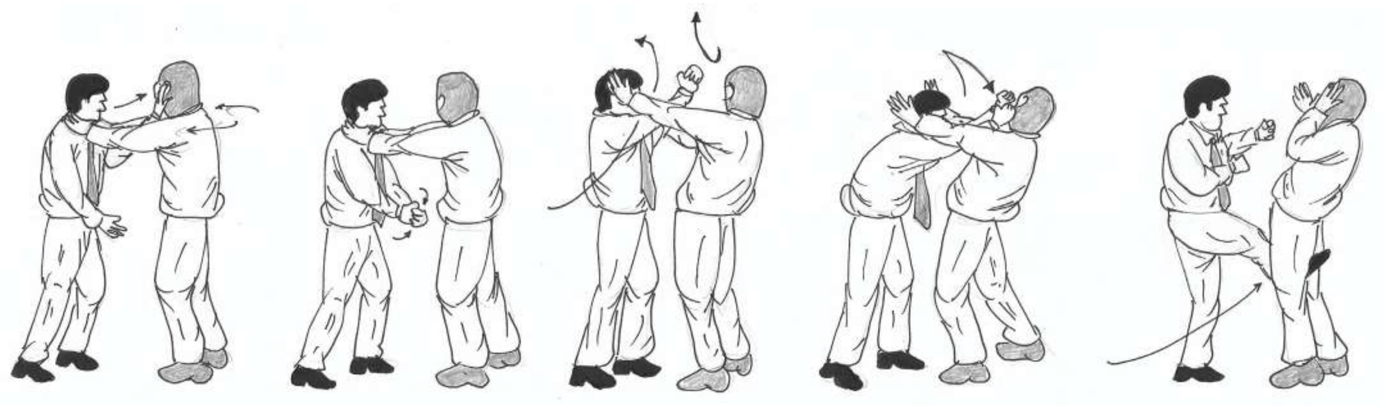
Ghost Stop Kick to the groin, followed by the release technique with simultaneous Knee Kick with Shin Grating to Foot Stomp

The general Release Technique presented above, is, -in the eyes of the author-, the best and the most versatile. But there are other release maneuvers available, and some could be more adapted to the circumstances and to the personality of the trainee. ***Just remember*** the *preceding Stop-strike* and the *Retzev*.

The first possibility is illustrated in the next Photos and Drawings: it is the '**breaking**' of the hold ***by hitting the grabbing arms forcefully upward***s. You concentrate your power by joining the hands or the fists, and you bend the knees to go slightly down as you strike up. Remember NOT to intertwine the fingers: it is dangerous for the joints.

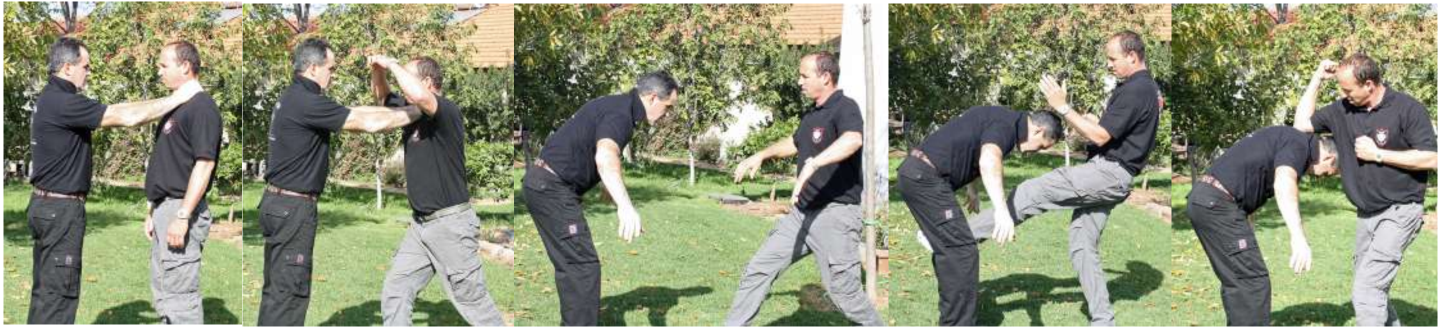


Place your palms strongly together and strike both up and out, slap both of his ears, catch the head and knee the face



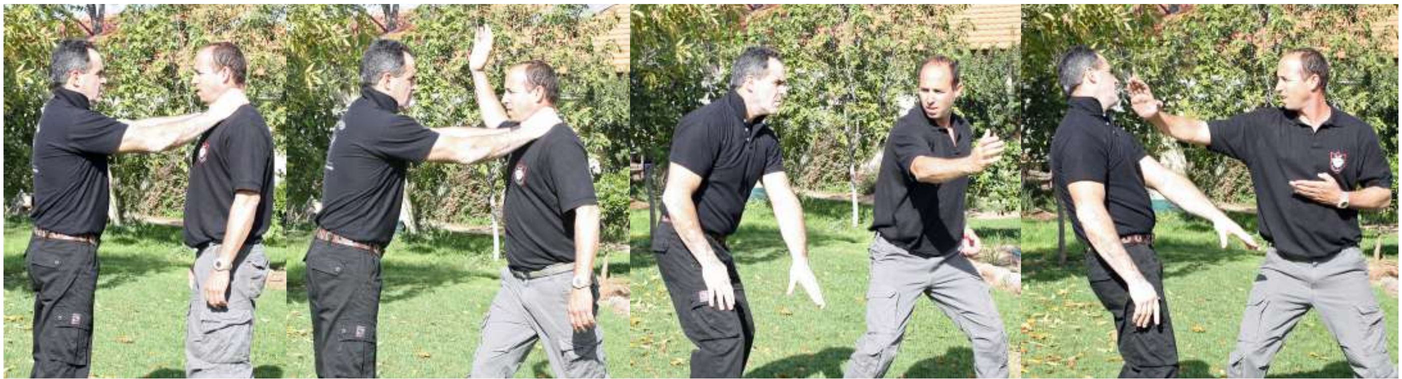
Join the fists and strike up forcefully, come back down on his nose and kick his groin

Another release method will have you striking **down** on the grabbing hands, *with everything you have*. Use the Knife side of the hand and the forearms to strike *through with your whole body*. You should aim for the fleshy part of the upper forearm of the attacker, close to the elbow; this part is rich in nerve endings. Open the arms after crashing through. Follow up with a Groin Kick and then with an Elbow Strike down into the exposed back of his neck.



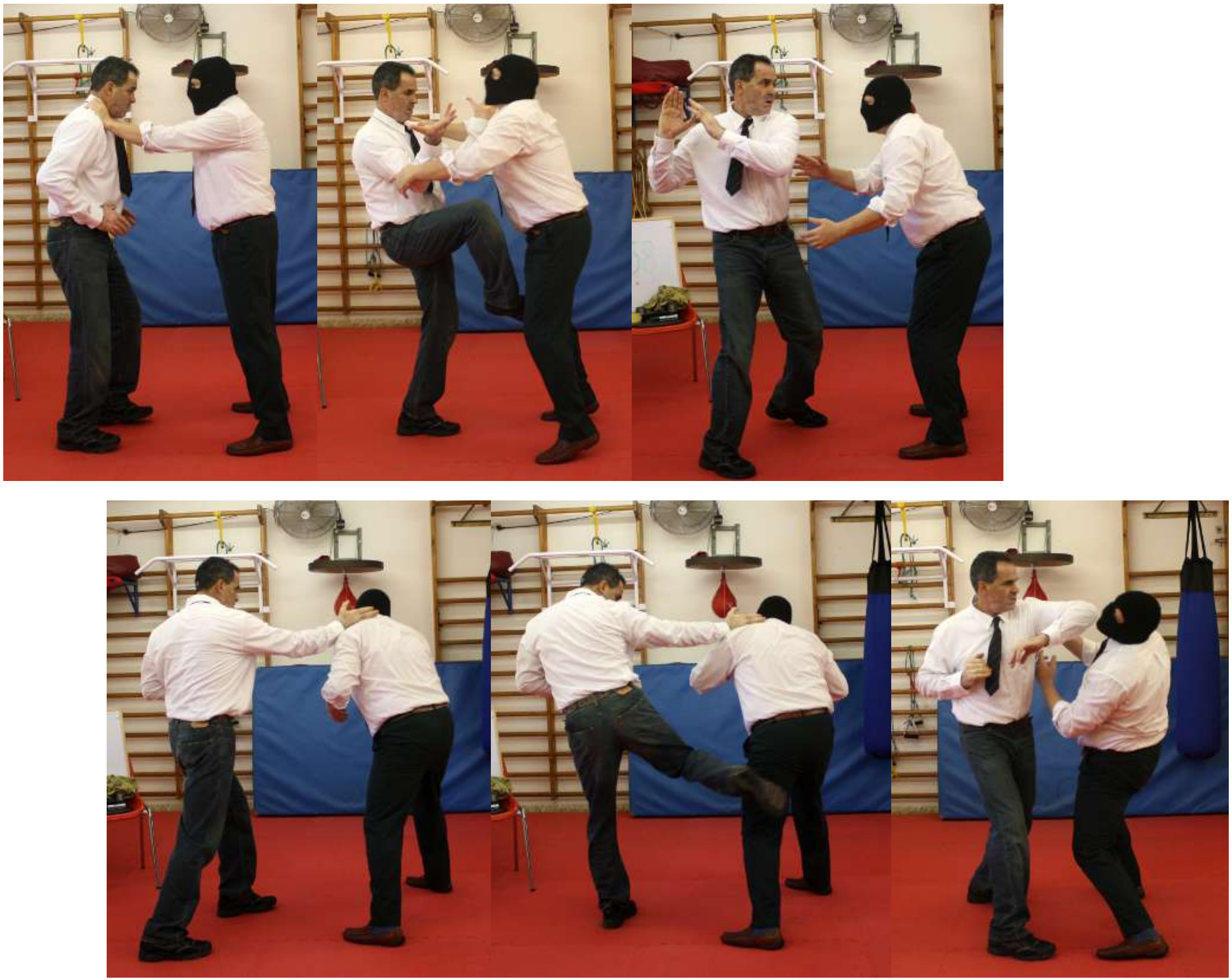
Striking down on the choking arms and follow-up

Sometimes ***simplicity*** is best, especially if you can start your technique *very early* in the grabbing. The next technique is a simplified version of our preferred Release Maneuver, also advisable if you are stronger than the attacker, and/or he has not strengthened his grip yet. You simply use a Knife-hand arm movement *through* the hold and come back with a Knife-hand Strike to the neck or throat.



A simple and easy version of the preferred release technique

And we shall conclude with a last set of Photos putting it all together: a Ghost Groin Kick as a stopping strike, an upward-arms-strike Release, a Knife-hand Strike, Low Kick and Elbow finish.



Ghost Groin Kick stopping strike and Upward Strike Release; follow-up

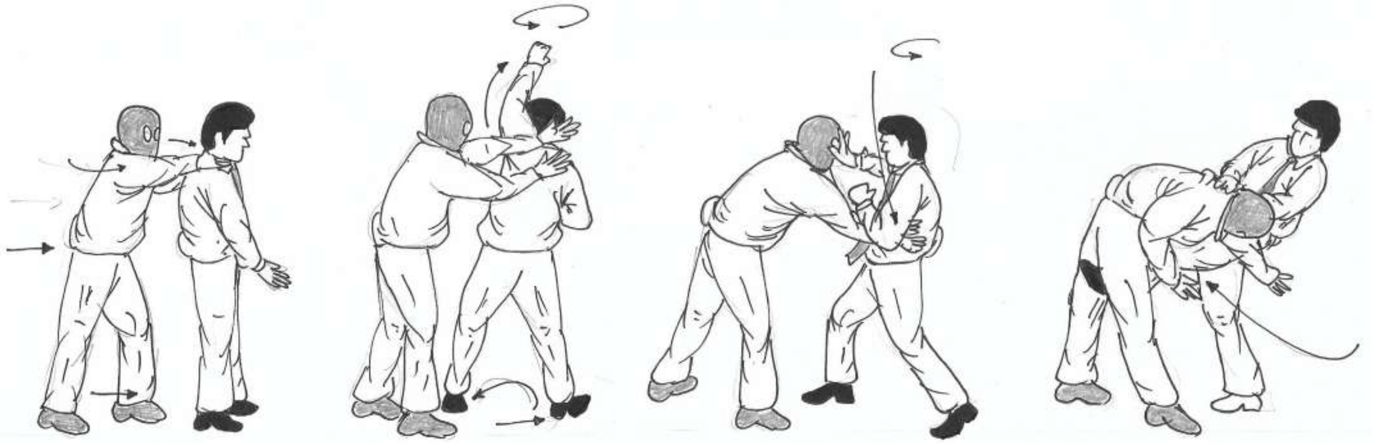
Quality is not an act, it is a habit.
~Aristotle

7.2 *Hands Choke from the Back*

A hands-choke from the rear will not allow you a preemptive strike; neither will it be easy to use a stopping strike before your release technique. But, on the other hand, it is not the most dangerous attack from the back. It is a choke, but not the most efficient. You have to react quickly because the fingers can damage your larynx box, and because the assailant, or his buddies, will probably follow with something else, like slamming you in the wall and squeezing.

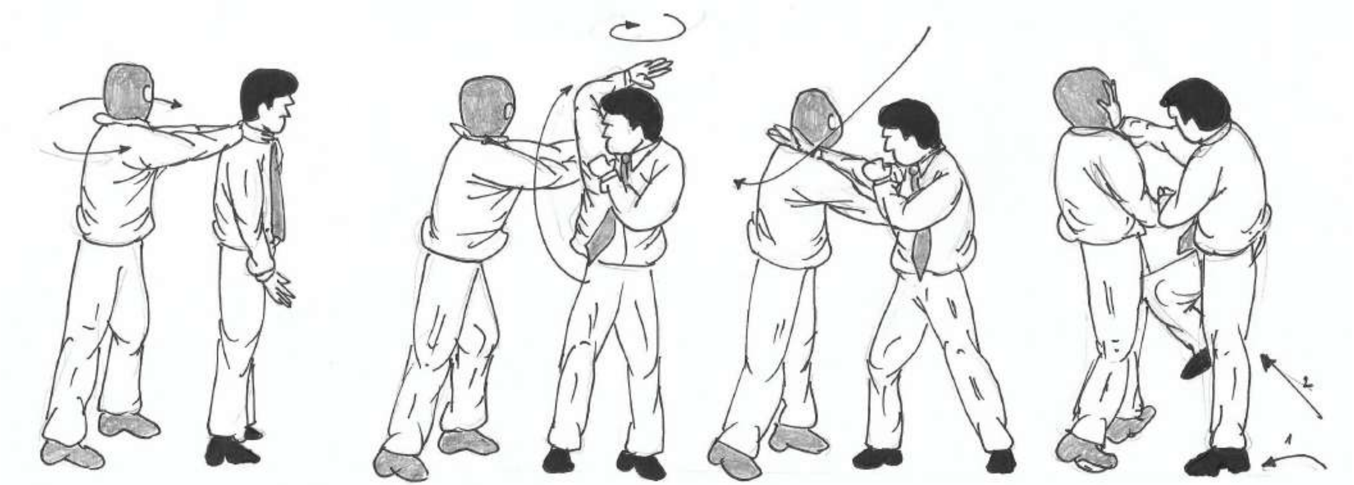
As soon as grabbed, *lower the chin and lift the shoulders* to ease the pain and loss of oxygen. Start your release maneuver simultaneously; do not give him time to settle the choke.

Usually, such an attack is of the 'pushing-you-forward' type. The best way to deal with it is presented in the coming Illustrations. Go forward with the push to disorient the attacker, do not resist. Then you will start to pivot around the axis of attack while lifting the arm of the pivot side. Just like in the previous section, you lift the arm and pivot *violently* to squeeze his choking hand and damage its joints. Just like in the previous section, *strike down with the elbow* of the raised hand onto the choking arms; use all power possible. This move will also trap his choking arms under your armpit. Poke his eyes with your free hand and kick his groin.



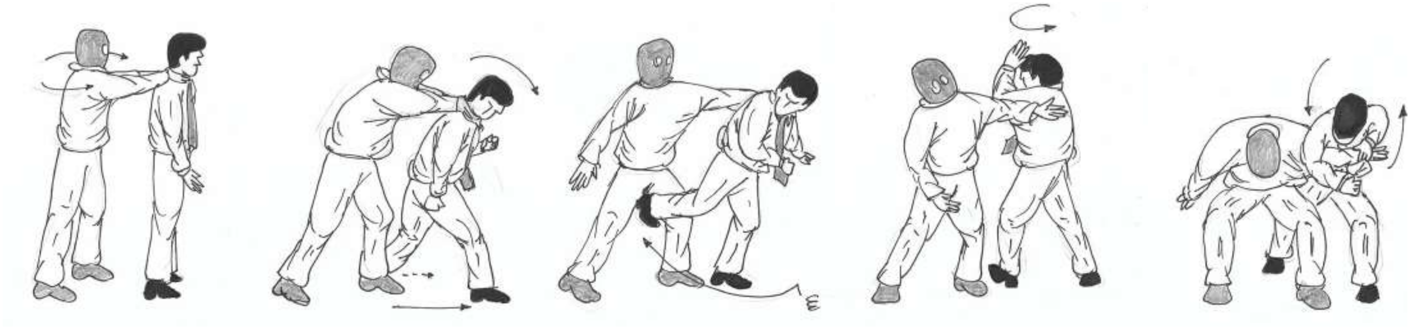
Go with the momentum of the attack and twist with a raised arm for a Downward Elbow Strike on the assailant's arms

An alternative way to execute the previous release is presented in the coming Drawings. It is best used in cases *where you have been able to react early*. Just like before, you lift one arm and you pivot violently; but this time the arm is raised bent in chamber position for a Downward Knife-hand Strike. You strike down and diagonally, directly into the side of the opponent's neck. Strike into the *neck* and the *clavicle*. Pull your hand back for an Eye Rake and knee his groin.



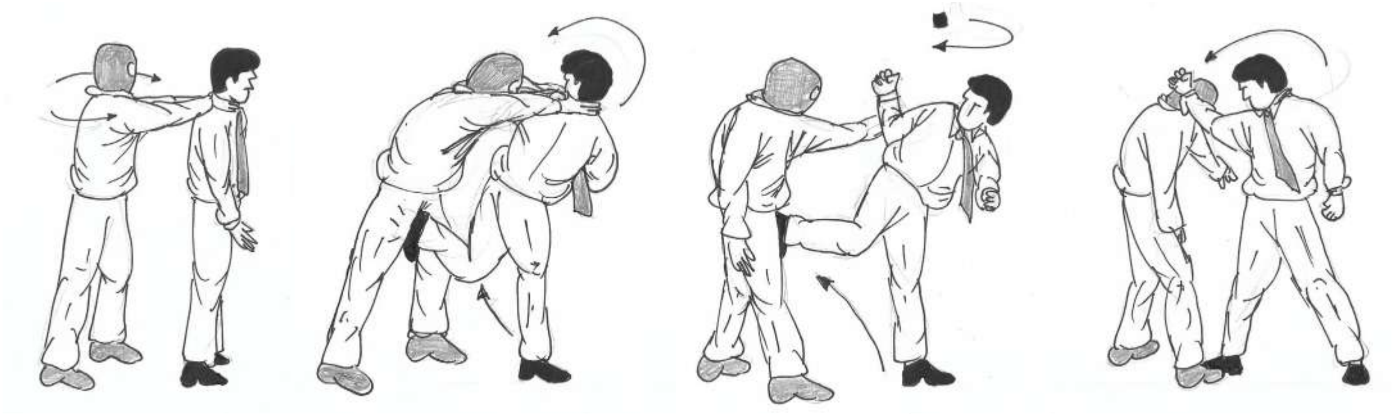
A variation of the Release Technique: Strike the attacker's neck instead of his choking arms

Another way to go is to back-kick the assailant, to mollify him before pivoting. In the Illustrations below, you see how to step forward with the push, but while letting your stepping foot come back for a Groin Upward Back Kick. You can then pivot with a lifted arm and take control of the attacker's arm. Strike his arm-locked elbow while pulling the wrist up.



Precede your Release by a Groin Back Kick

In many cases, kicking will be enough to obtain a release. The next Figures, at the top of next page, show how to deliver Back Kicks to the groin, alternating sides, and how to conclude with a Forearm Strike to the side of the neck of the assailant.



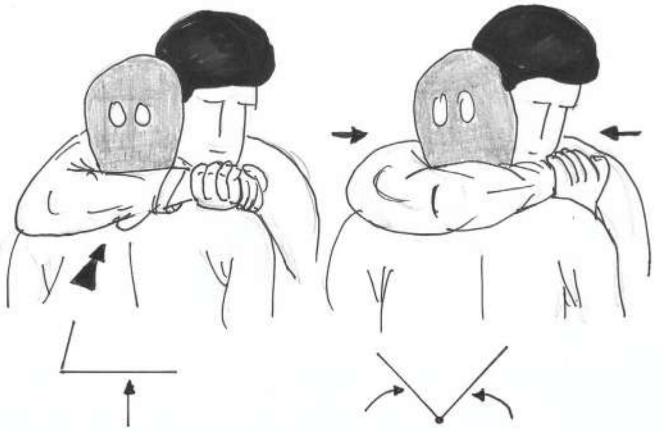
Kick the attacker's groin until he releases you; then follow up

7.3 Rear Naked Choke

The Forearm Choke from behind is an extremely dangerous attack, potentially lethal: you are in mortal danger and are justified in doing everything possible to free yourself.

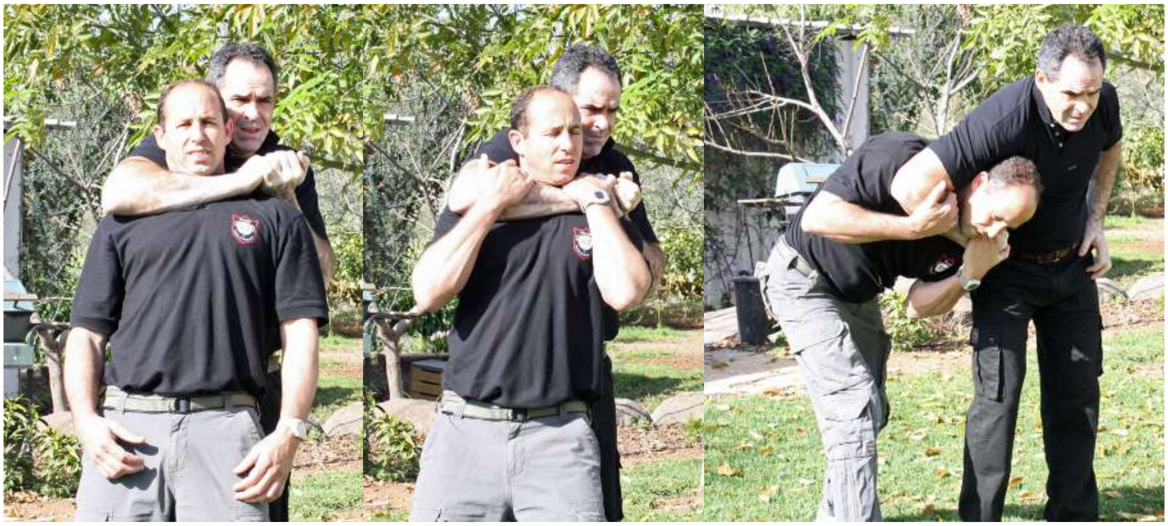
There are two types of chokes from behind: the **respiratory** choke and the **blood** choke.

The first uses the lower part of the forearm to compress the trachea and restrict oxygen intake. It is painful and can cause physical damage to the larynx box; it can cause death by asphyxiation, but takes longer to act than a Blood Choke.
The *Blood Choke* is less painful, but it can cause irreparable damage and death by restricting the flow of blood to the brain. When done by a trained individual, it is extremely dangerous and fast-acting. It uses the elbow joint as the hinge for both the upper arm and the forearm to press the carotid arteries on the sides of the neck.
Both types are potentially lethal, and you have to react instantly and with no mercy.



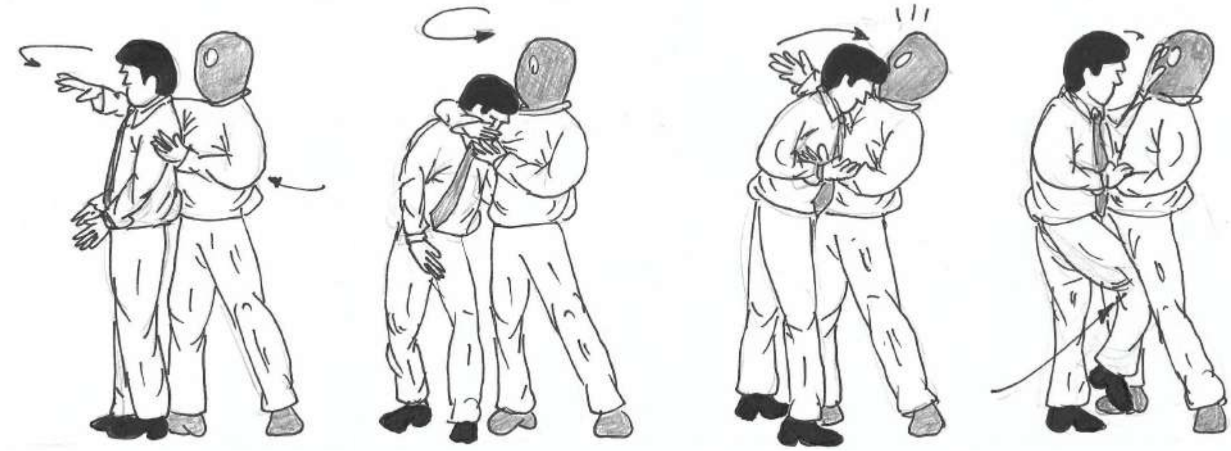
Respectively: the Respiratory Rear Choke and the Blood Rear Choke

The coming set of Photos illustrates the *general Release Technique* against the Standing Rear Naked Choke. The Photos show a Respiratory Choke, but the general idea is the same for both. Drill the general release before going to the full techniques. You first try to alleviate the pressure on your neck by pulling on the choking arm(s). You then bend and escape rearwards on the attacker's side. Of course, if the Choke is set or close to be, you will certainly need some preceding strike to mellow the attacker.



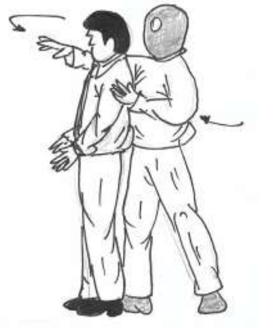
The classic General Escape Technique against a Rear Naked Choke

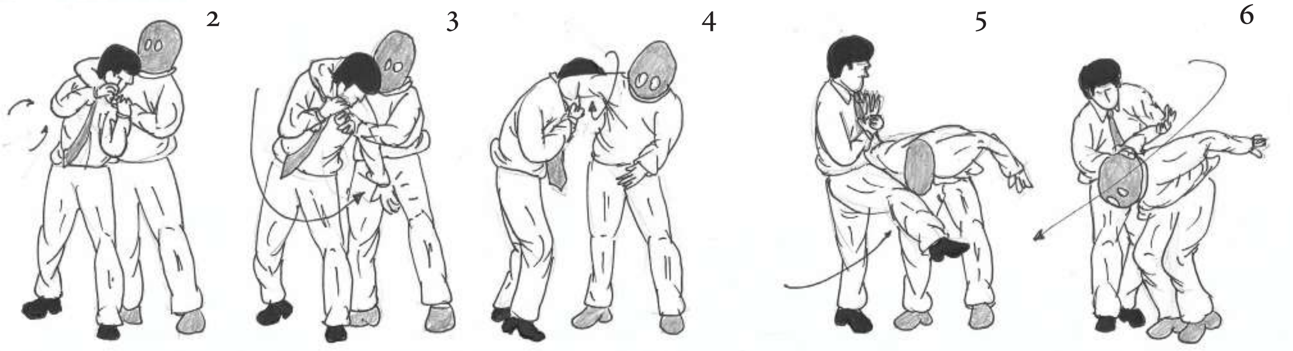
This Release Maneuver will hopefully be unnecessary if you can ***react before the attacker can even set his Choke***. In the Illustrations below, you can see how to twist at once towards the attacker while headbutting his nose. Follow up with a Groin Knee strike and Rake his eyes for good measure. KISS! Keep it Simple, Stupid...



Twist as soon as the attacker extends his arms to set up the Rear Choke; headbutt and kick groin

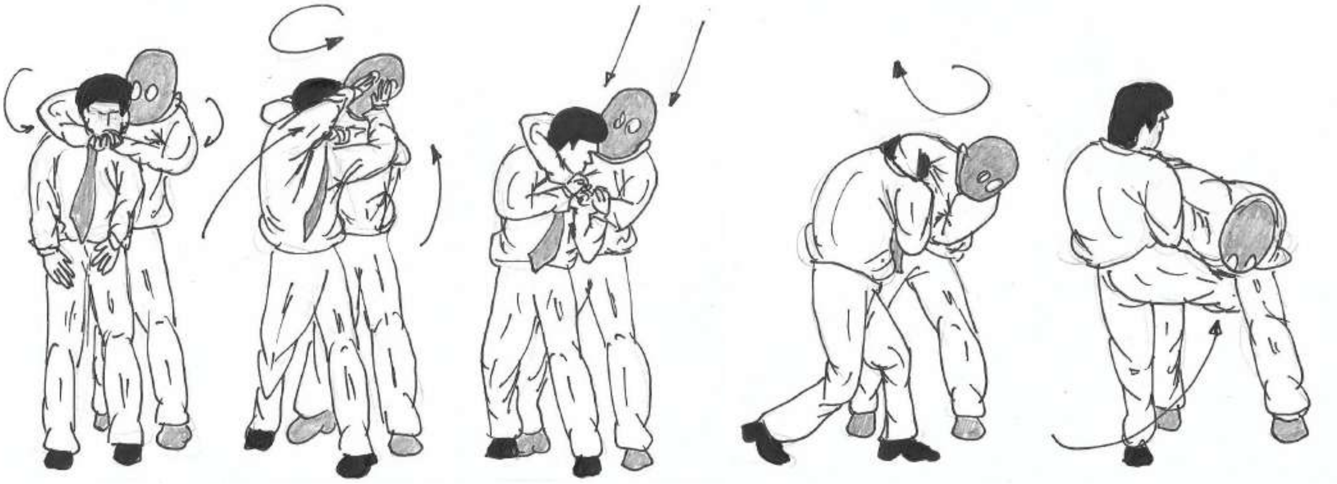
If you are a little bit too late, with the ***Choking hands clasped but no real pressure yet***, proceed as per the next set of Figures. Grab the choking wrist to prevent the pressure and move slightly sideways while bending. Release his wrist to forcefully strike his *groin*. You can now proceed with the classic Release while keeping control of his arm. Lift his twisted arm violently and kick his face (with your knee or shin) as he bends forward. Set your armlock, from where you can keep kicking him or simply pushing him forcefully forward.





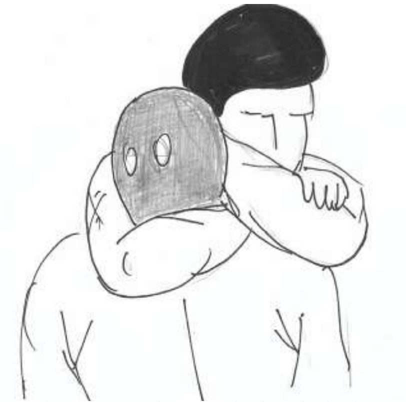
Still early in the Choke set-up, you can easily slap his groin and go into classic release

If you have been surprised and a ***Respiratory Choke has been set up***, here is what to do: Throw *immediately* both arms over your head and try to strike his *eyes* with your fingers. Bring then your arms down forcefully while grabbing his choking wrists. You have to make use of the momentum created by having lifted your arms up high (and hopefully reached his eyes). The powerful and sudden pull-down should release the Choke pressure and give you room for the classic Escape/Release. As soon as you are free, pull his twisted arm towards you and kick his groin. Start your own *Retzev*.

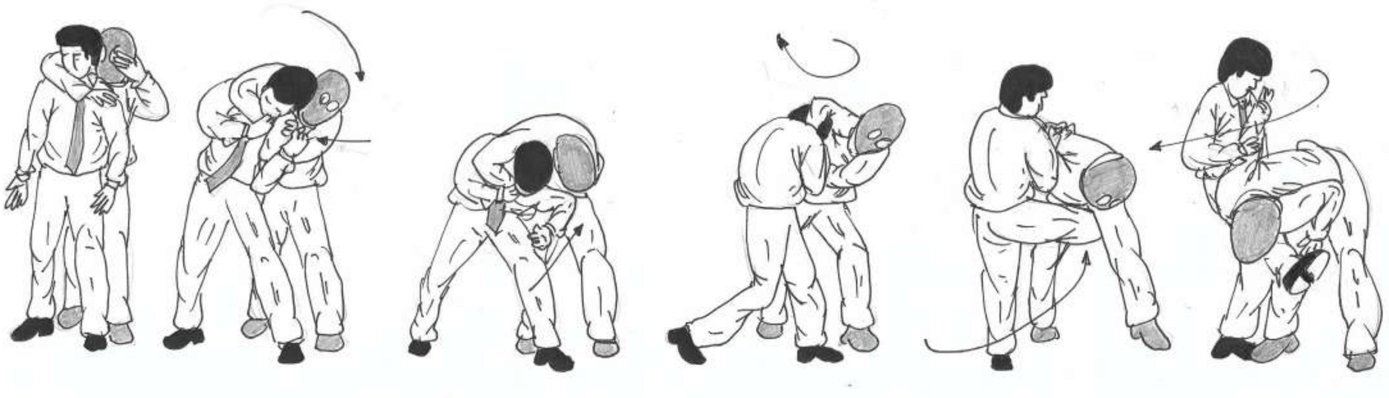


In a Respiratory Choke, attack the eyes to soften his resistance to a classic Release

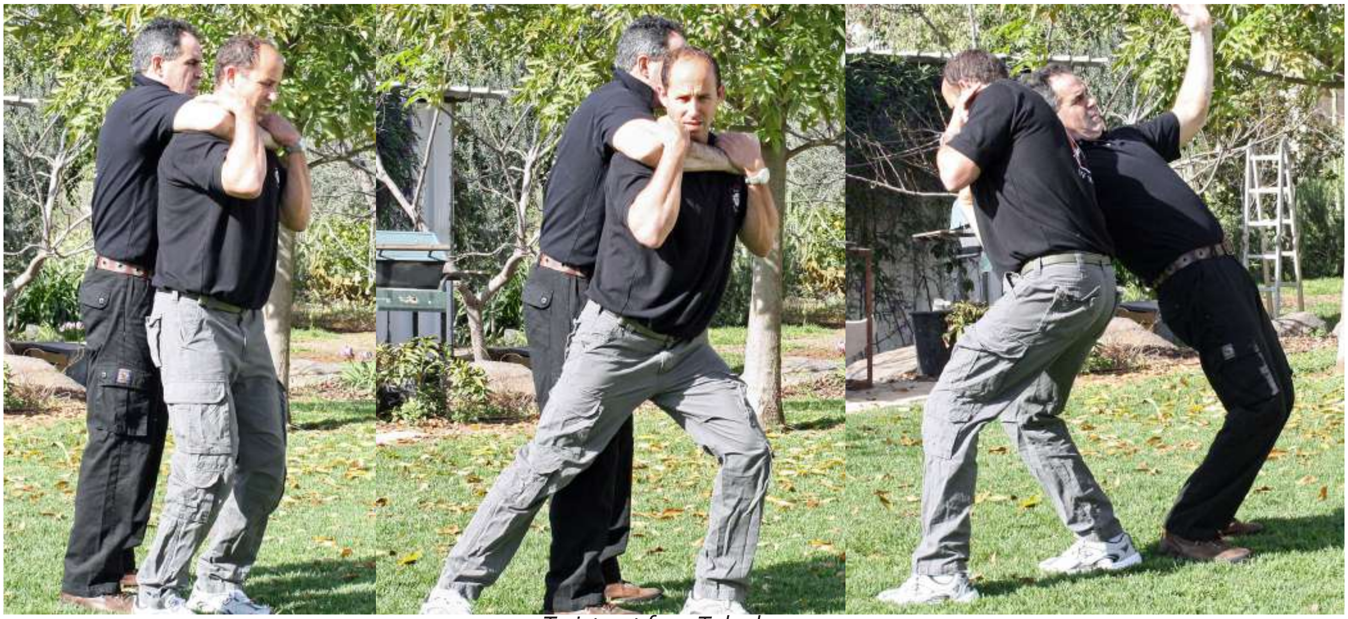
And here is what to do in a ***Blood Choke***. We have presented here a more professional Blood Choke, as it will be set by an experienced Martial Artist or a Street Fighter. The throat is caught in a symmetric vise, the choking hand hooks into the elbow joint of the other arm which hand comes behind the head of the victim for additional pressure. This is a very dangerous choke and it shows that the attacker is not a novice.


The more advanced Blood Choke

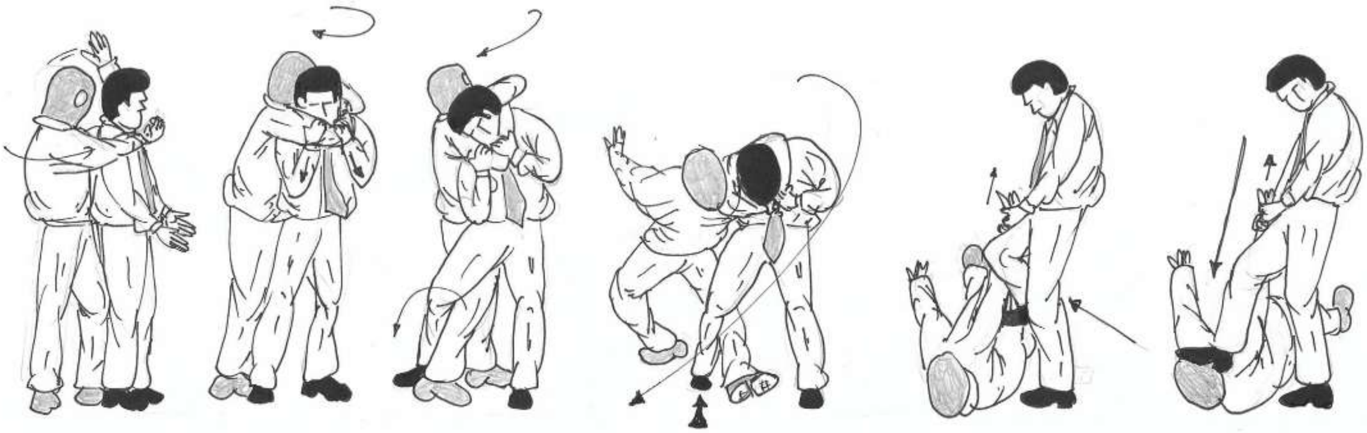
In that case, and in that of a simpler *Blood Chok*e, you have to catch the choking arm close to the wrist and *turn your chin towards this 'wrist' side*. Pulling in this way should alleviate the effects of the choke. When grabbing, you should try to **grab a finger** of his choking arm, where it grabs the other arm pushing on your head. Pry *only one finger*, but then bend it back forcefully with breaking it in mind. At the same time, bend your body sideways and make room in front of his groin. Release your hand explosively to elbow or slap his groin (according to the distance). This is life and death, you must strike as powerfully as possible. It is also possible to stomp his foot before this strike in order to draw his attention away. Once his groin has been touched, it is time to go for the classic Escape/Release. As soon as out of the headlock, you should pull his twisted arm towards you and kick his groin. Twist his arm *brusquely* in Arm-lock position and kick his face. You could then break his arm, keep kicking at him or push him (by the twisted arm, in order to damage it). In any case, keep at it; this guy is dangerous.


In Blood Choke, bend sideways, twist the chin and grab the wrist to open the vise; then attack the groin

To conclude, we shall present an ***alternative Release technique*** that should be followed by an *Outer Reap Takedown*. Make a surprising and *explosive pivot* while pulling down on the hold: you get in position to 'break' his posture, with or without placing your leg behind his. It works quite well, but you should be ready to go all the way to the ground with him if he does not fully release you in time. In that case, make sure that you fall heavily on him.



Twist out for a Takedown



The whole technique against a 'professional' Blood Choke; after the Takedown, kick his extended arm to harm his elbow joint and then, stomp his face

Use only that which works, and take it from any place you can find it.
~Bruce Lee

PART Six

More Offensive Techniques: Range Covering, Combinations, Guard Neutralization

סגירת מרחק, קומבינציות וניטרול ידיים

This part of the book corresponds to the Chapter about ***Offensive Techniques*** *in our previous 'Krav Maga Kicks'. Our previous book was skewed towards kicking, although it did present general offensive techniques often starting with a hand movement. We will now elaborate with more rounded offensive techniques, with maneuvers for Range Covering, with Naturally-flowing striking combinations, with 'special' attacks and with guard neutralizations.*

These are all offensive techniques, even if they appear after a defense in the middle of a fight. They should be drilled in the Krav Maga spirit of always being offensive. In fact, they all should be looked at as Preemptive Techniques, to be used as soon as you 'feel' that the assailant is about to launch his own attack.

The trainee should not aim at mastering all the techniques presented. As already mentioned, he should aim at truly mastering only a few techniques to be drilled assiduously. But the trainee should drill all of them and try to use them in training and in free fighting. This is the only way to become familiar with the possible maneuvers, and then let the body decide which are most suited to your specific physique and psychology.

6.1 Range Covering Techniques

Mastering **Range Covering** is very important for all Fighting Arts. As a fight generally starts from the outrange from which neither protagonist can land a strike without a step move, you have to learn *how to get into striking range as safely as possible*.

Krav Maga is all about being offensive from the start and all the way to the end of the fight. This means that, if confronted in a no-escape situation, you should go on the offensive as early as possible. *By doing so, you take the initiative and hopefully keep it, you assert your status as a 'no-victim' and you try to place your potential assailant on the defensive.*

Our previous book (*Krav Maga Kicks*) did already present a few **Range Covering Techniques** in the Chapter about 'Offensive Techniques'. They were not specifically presented as range covering, but they are obviously so. They were generally deep-lunging forward maneuvers with some protective arms configuration. And further in this section, we shall present *Guard Closing Techniques*, which are also, in fact, Range Coverers: the closing of the opponent's guard neutralizes his upper limbs for the time needed to get into close range. So the concept of **Range Covering** is very wide and encompasses many possible techniques. The few that we are going to present below are more specific to getting into striking distance from relatively far away. *The explosion forward is supposed to surprise a potential assailant who feels safe where he is and expects you to cower in place or to retreat in front of his threatening attitude.*

The illustrated examples presented further in the text will make the concept abundantly clear.

In order to become **a good Range Coverer**, it is imperative to develop Explosive Power and to learn to avoid any Telegraphing of the impending jump forward.

Explosive Power can be achieved by:

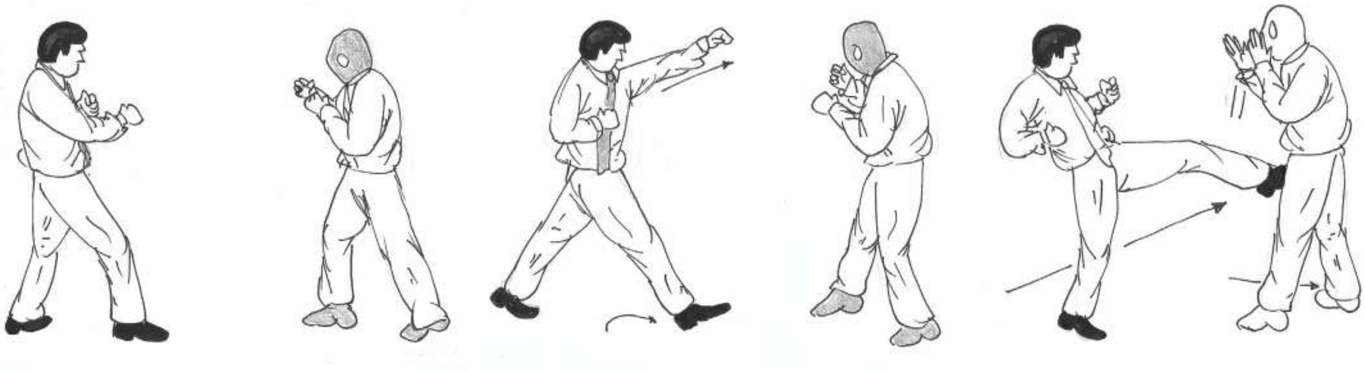
- Intense drilling of the techniques,
- Calves building in the gym,
- Daily Rope Skipping (at least 20 min),
- Lower Body Plyometrics.

Non-telegraphing can be perfected by:

- Drilling the explosion forward in front of the mirror,
- Drilling the disconnect between upper and lower body during the forward jump (upper body stays in exact same position while the legs push forward),
- Training with a partner that 'spots' you.

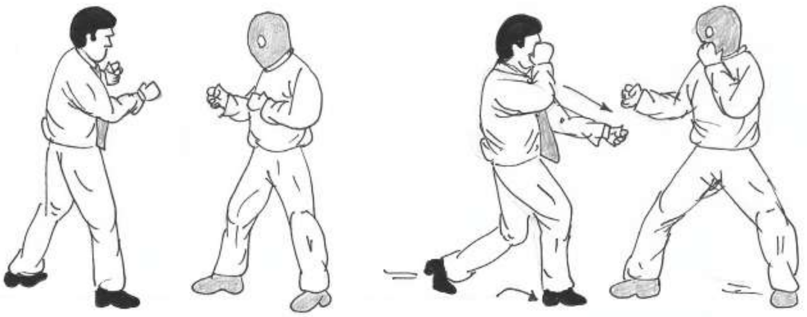
Once you have mastered the techniques presented, you should complete them with your own *Retzev*: once you have closed the distance and struck your opponent, there is no stopping until the fight is totally over.

(1)The simplest type of Range Covering is by feinting high and kicking low.
Feinting high, even if you cannot even reach the opponent will nevertheless elicit an instinctive reaction and draw his attention high while letting him feel safe because he is out of range of the punch. The very simple example below shows how you feint with a hopelessly far Cross Punch, while in fact stepping close enough for a successful long Front Kick to the groin area. Follow up, of course.

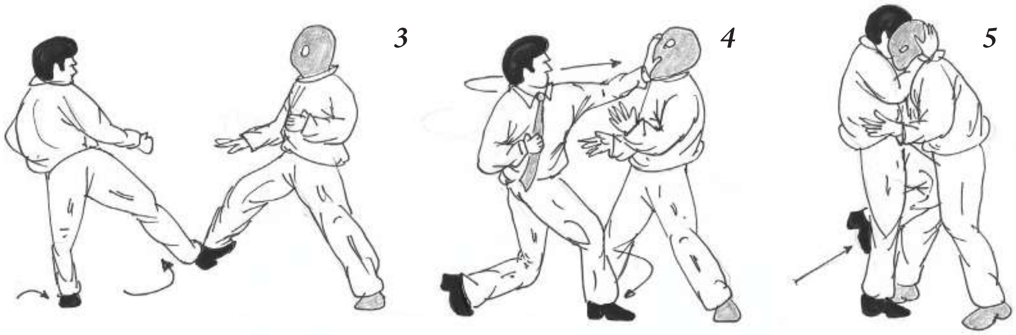


Lunge forward with a high out-of-range Punch, but kick long to catch him in the groin

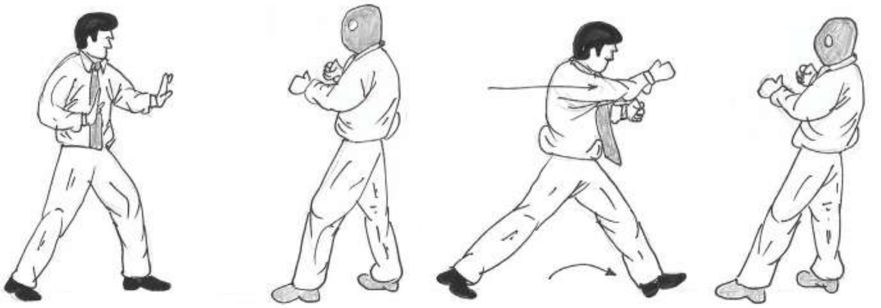
The next example is based on the same principle, but from **a shorter distance**. In that instance, you feint a Cross to the body that has no pretention to score, but only to make the opponent retreat slightly to stay out of range. You follow with a front-leg Sweep Kick to the front inside ankle that will place the opponent off-balance while *you lunge forward* with a real Cross Palm Strike to the face. You can naturally flow into a Groin Knee Strike as you take hold of his head (eventually striking his ears). From there, the *Retzev* is yours.



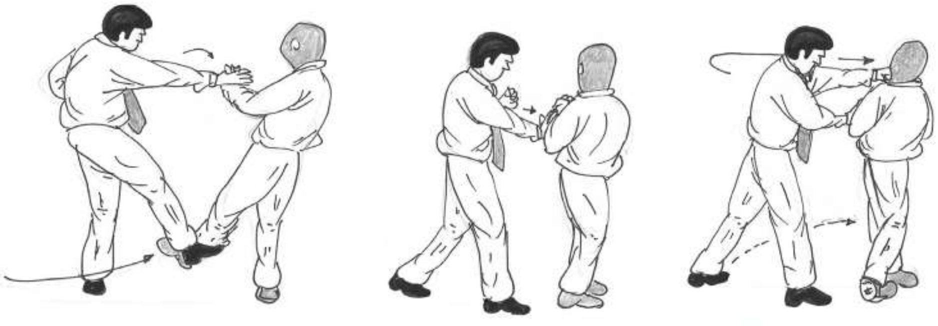
Feint mid-body and kick his retreating ankle to place him off-balance



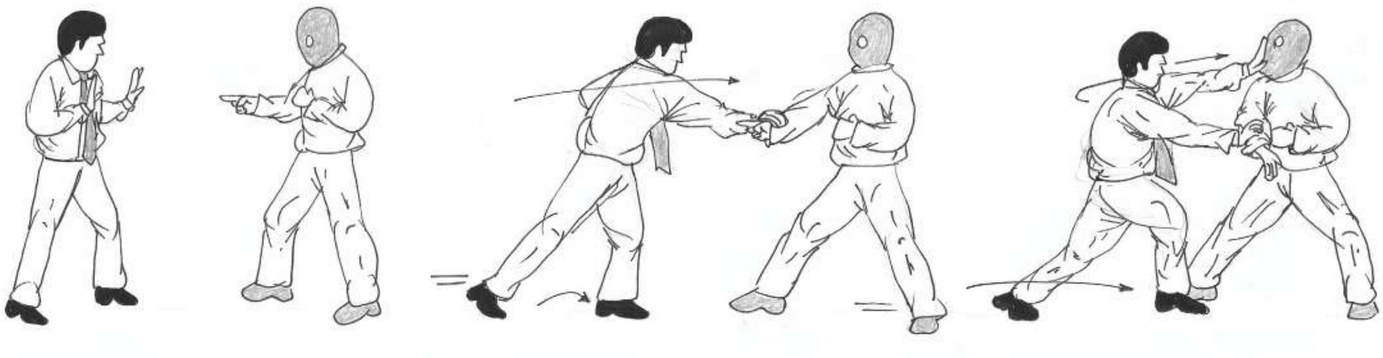
The same technique can be executed with a **rear-leg Sweep Kick** to the outside ankle of the retreating leg. As illustrated below:



Lunge forward with a hopeless high Cross Punch, and rear-leg sweep-kick his front ankle to place him off-balance

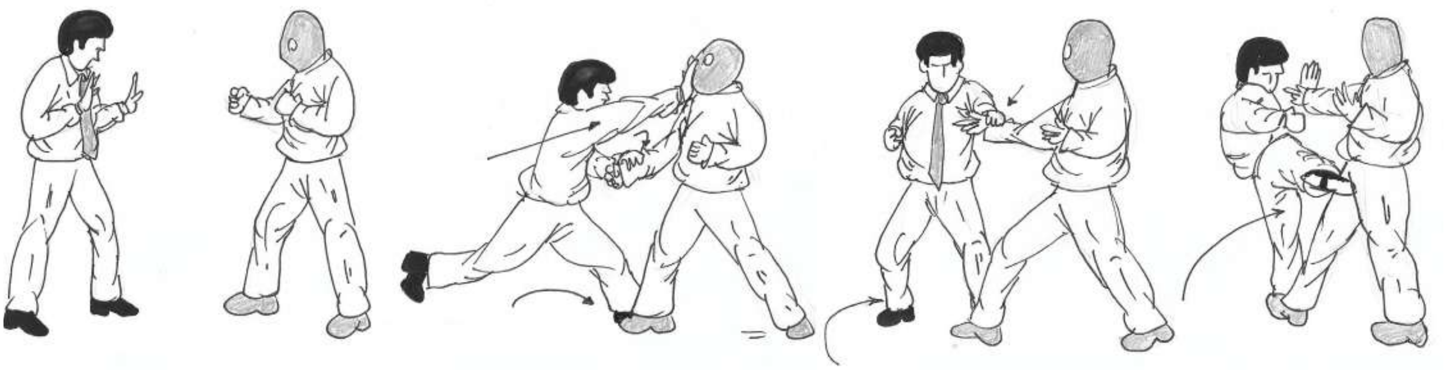


(2)The other main type of Range Covering is in fact close to Guard Closing:
you lunge while catching his front hand to unsettle him and to neutralize his weapon closest to you. The grab is in fact a fast feint. There is no need for a serious grab: this is about being very fast and allow for the first strike to his face from your other hand. Simple and effective: the KISS principle...



Lunge explosively forward to grab his front hand, and strike his face with your other palm

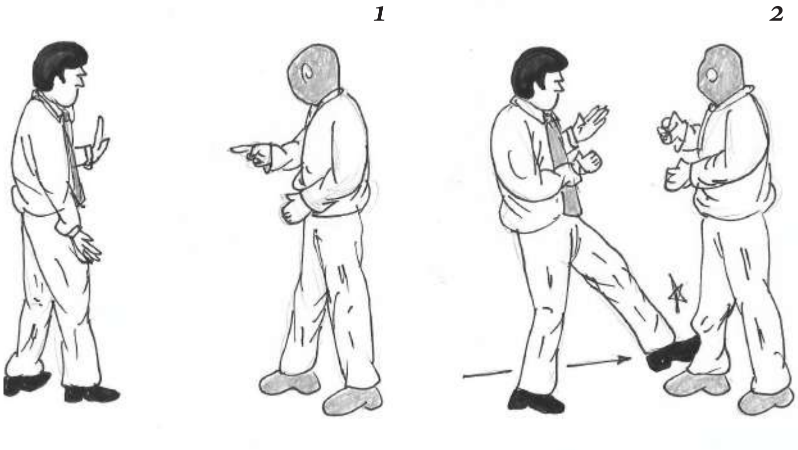
It is sometimes safer to immediately **get out of the centerline** after such a technique, in case the first strike is not decisive enough. As illustrated below, you can then follow up with a Groin Roundhouse Kick.



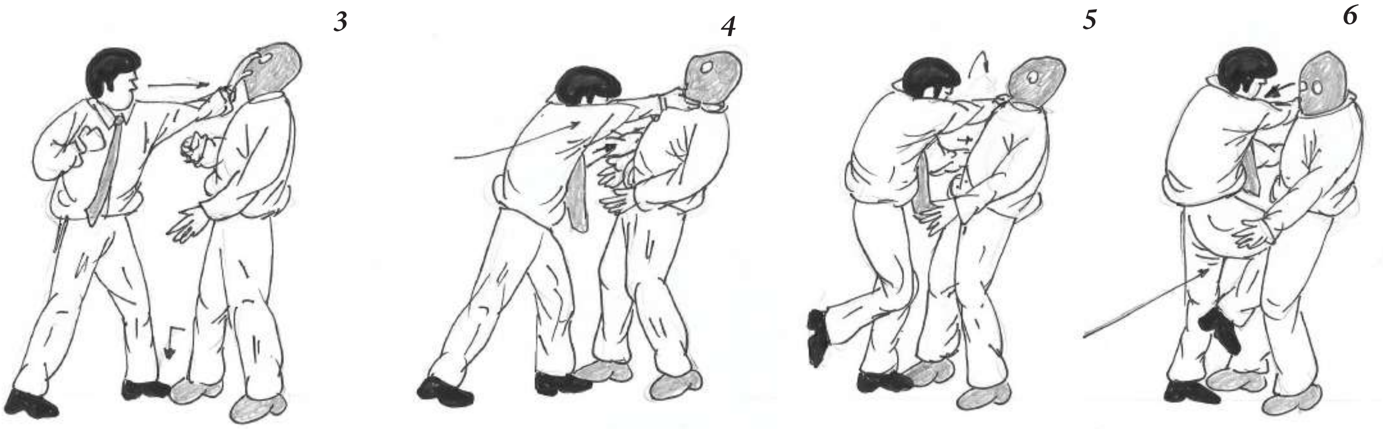
If needed, get out of the centerline after the lunge and follow-up

(3) A last type of Range Covering is ... the Low Kick,
but it requires mastering the *non-telegraphing* principle. By keeping the upper body immobile, and especially the head height, you can step close enough for a *fast* Low Front Kick to the shin. The Kick is unexpected: when he'll realize you are approaching, the opponent will expect a Punch and concentrate up. The low kick is invisible. Follow up with a front-hand Palm Strike, a rear-hand Throat 'Tiger Mouth' Strike, and a Groin Knee Strike (while pulling his shoulder forward). Illustrated at the top of next page.

➤



An un-telegraphed Low Front Kick to the shin is very difficult to spot and avoid; and so will be the subsequent high follow-up



6.2 Guard Neutralization Techniques

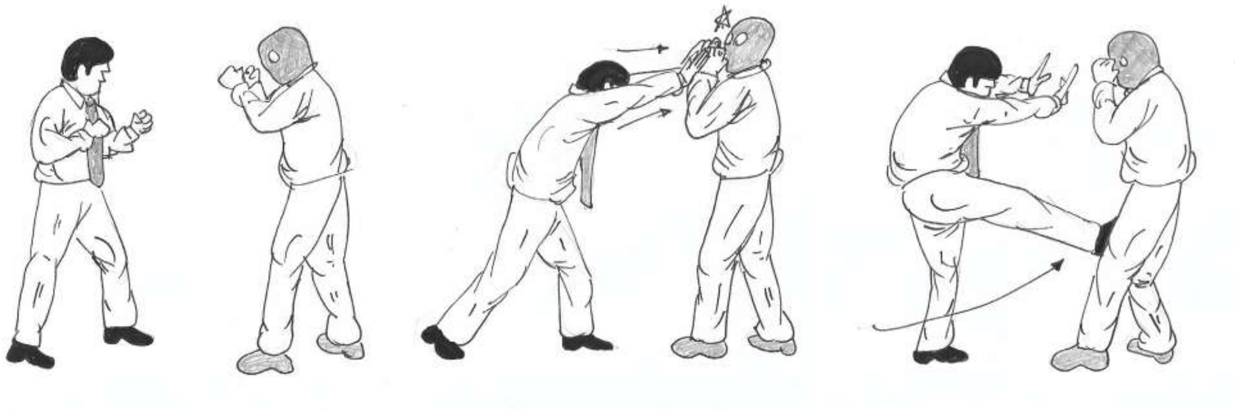
'Closing' the opponent's tight guard will allow you to neutralize both arms *long enough to deliver your first Strike with impunity*. From then on, it is for you to keep at it. **Guard Neutralization** is, in fact, a Range Closing-type of technique, as it allows you to get closer safely. It works best with people who have a tight, tense and closed guard (like a boxer). The principle is very easy to understand and will be widely illustrated further in the book. Remember that the closing of the opponent's guard is not the purpose of the technique: *you must neutralize his upper limbs just long enough to allow your first strike*. You are not trying to tie him up or to grab him in any way; you just need to control and unsettle him for the start of your *Retzev*!

➡

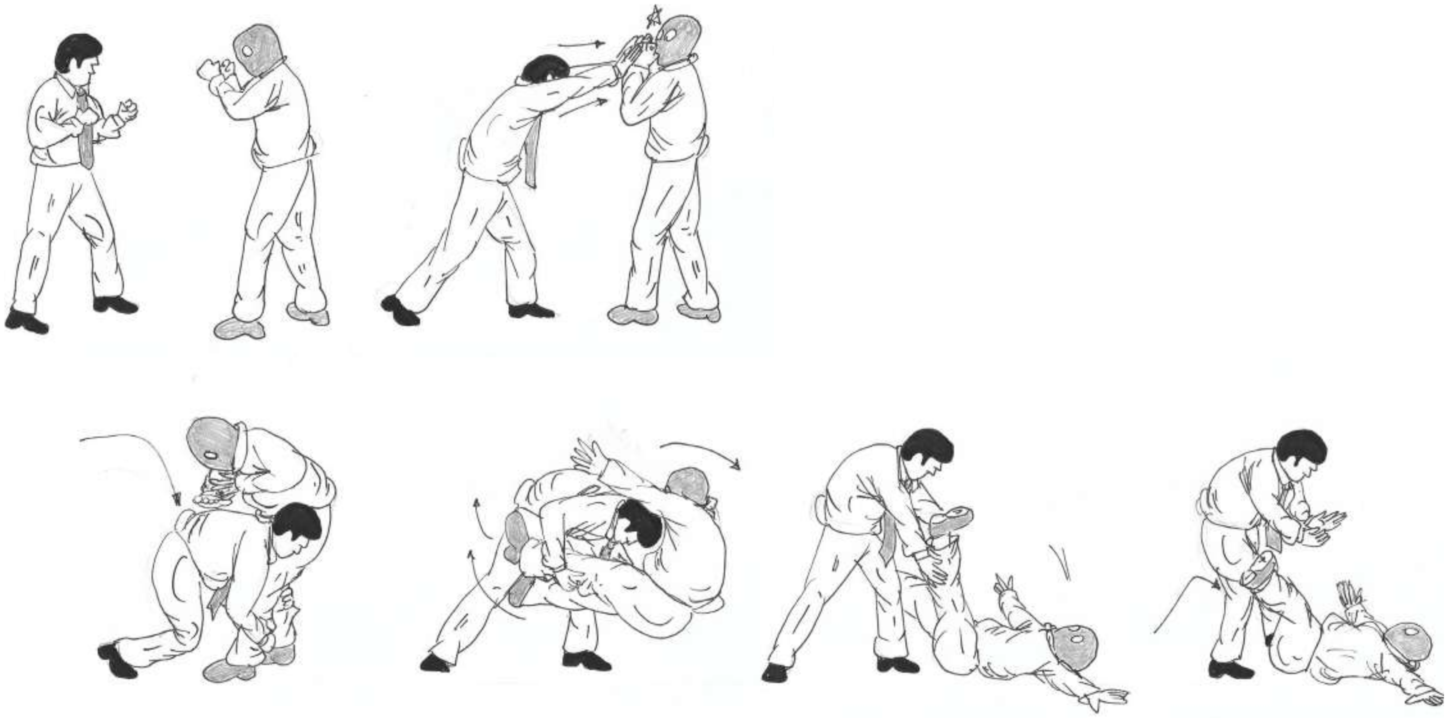
(1) The simplest Guard Neutralization technique is to lunge and push the opponent's guarding hands forcefully into his own face.

The mindset should be to dive all out and try *to strike him violently in the face with his own fists*. The principle is very simple, but the technique is fiendishly efficient if you take the time to drill it seriously. Remember: Keep It Simple, Stupid!

In the examples illustrated below, you follow up either with a Groin Kick **or** with a Twin Leg Tackle (followed by a Groin Stomp).



Crash his guard into his own face and kick the groin

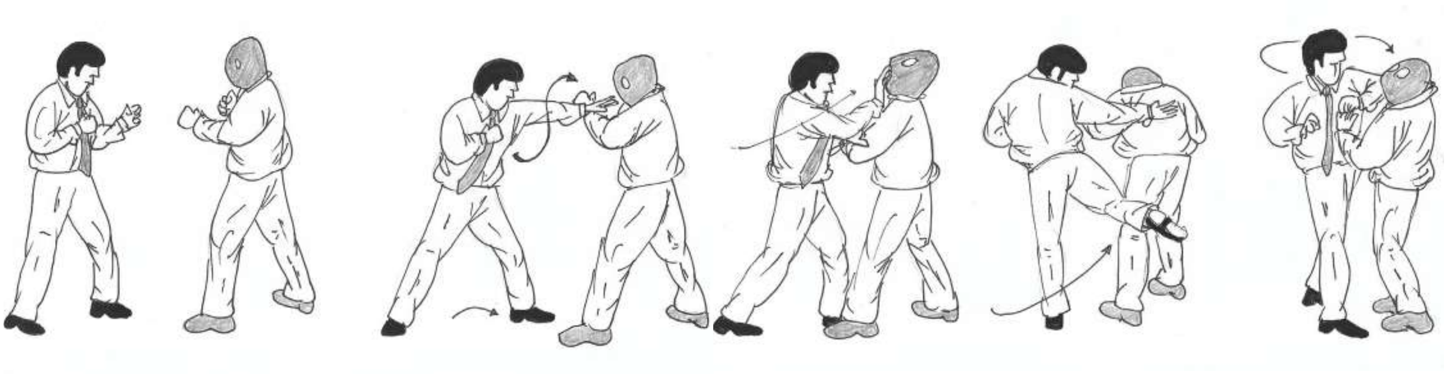


Dive to push his hands in his face and tackle him before stomping his groin

(2) The second Guard Neutralization Principle is simple too, and we have seen it sketchily in the Range Covering section.

You push his front hand in front of his rear hand to neutralize both, while you use your free hand to strike. From there, the *Retzev* will start. This principle works better for lower guards, more Karate-like than Boxing-like. This is, again, both very simple and very efficient. It needs drilling though, especially the *explosive unexpected jump forward*.

In the example illustrated, you follow up with a Palm Strike to the chin (or nose), a Low Kick to the knee and a hip-driven Circular Elbow to the side of the head.



Jump explosively forward and push his front hand in front of his rear hand; strike his face with your free hand and start your Retzev

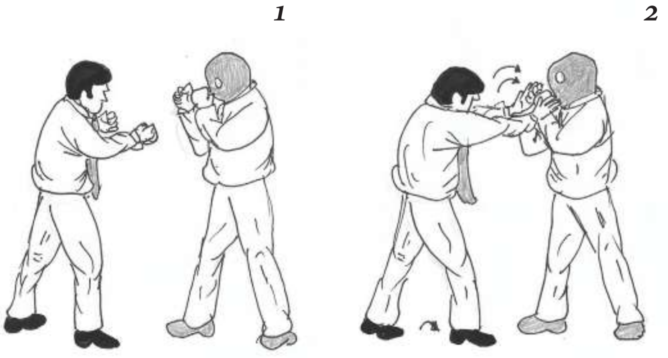
(3) The last type of Guard Neutralization is slightly more complex and requires more training:

You go *for both his guarding hands with both your hands*. This is a more sophisticated but very efficient technique. It is for more advanced '*Kravists*' and requires serious drilling, but the results are worthwhile.

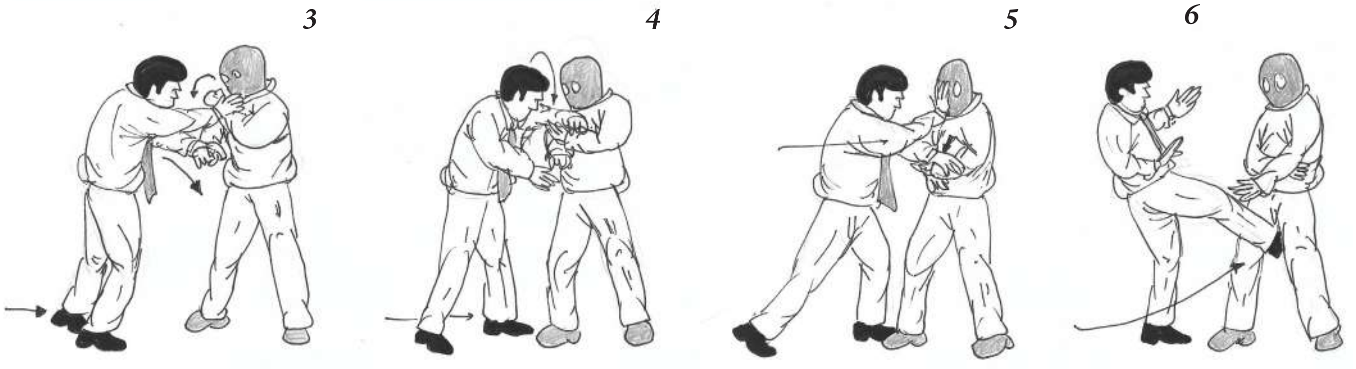
The technique works well against opponents with a tight high guard with fists close to one another. You lunge forward and cover both his hands with yours. And then, you push one hand down and the other one over it. When this is done you can let go of the hand controlling his lower hand: *it is his own upper hand that controls it; upper hand that is controlled by yours*. In fact, you are more or less 'tying his own hands in a knot'. The purpose is, of course, not the neutralization, but the follow-up techniques it allows against the opponent who is briefly at your mercy.

Our first example, at the top of next page, shows how you take advantage of his neutralization to simply (KISS!) palm-strike his nose and kick his groin

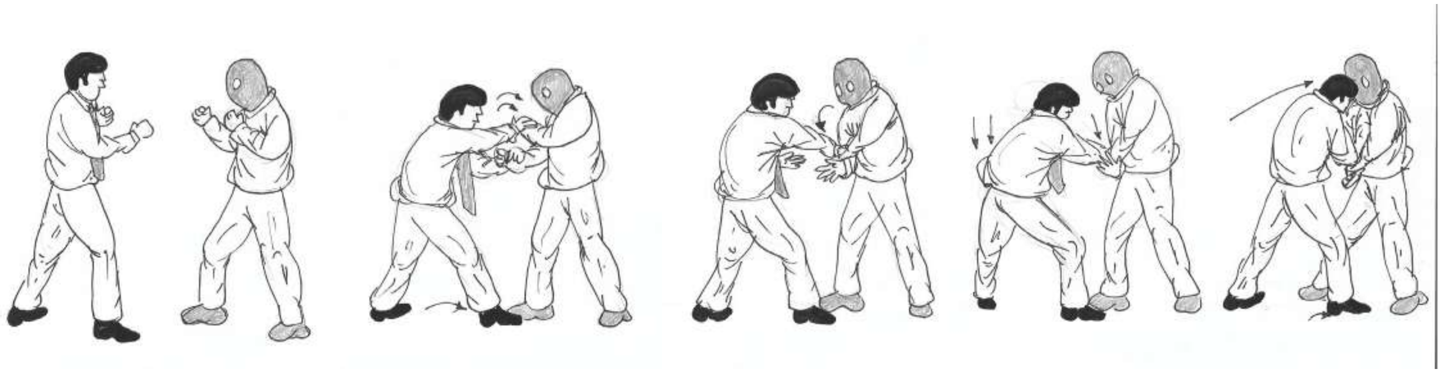
➔



Lunge and fold his front hand over his rear hand that you have lowered; follow up



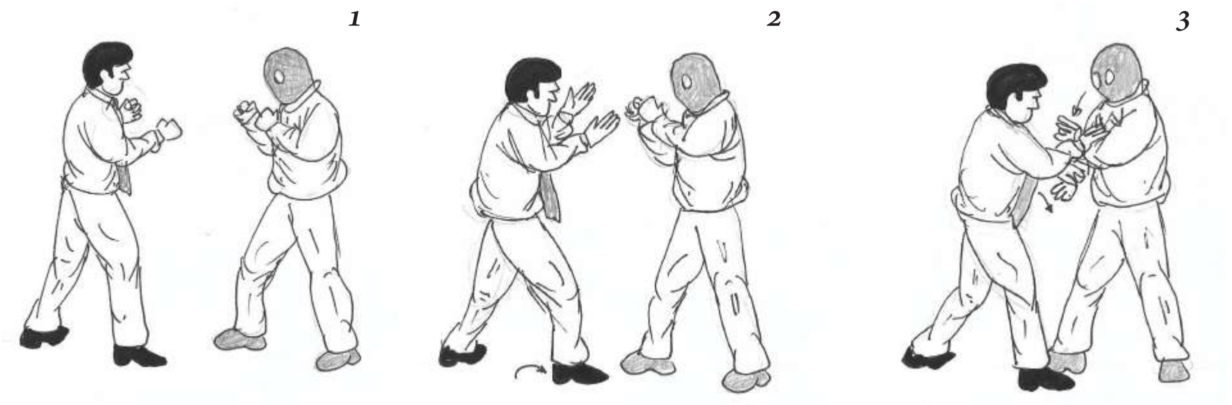
Our second example is even simpler and makes use of the momentum of your powerful forward lunge: you simply keep going for a Headbutt into his face, as his hands are neutralized.



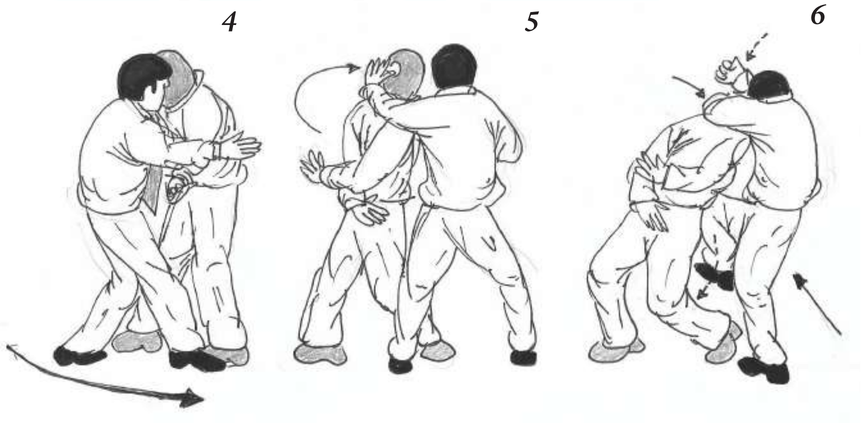
Lunge towards him with a Headbutt while neutralizing both his guarding hands

Our last example is more complex but illustrates the fact that the neutralization is not a hold *but a dynamic transition technique*. In this example, illustrated at the top of next page, you take advantage of the neutralization to keep going forward and to overtake the opponent diagonally. You can then let go of the hands to immediately 'go' for his eyes; as you are nearly behind him, he will not see that coming. Follow up by: (1) encircling his neck and pull him back, (2) kneeing his kidneys, (3) stomping the back of his knee, and (4) hammer-fisting his face from behind.

➤



Make use of the neutralization to get his back; attack his eyes and start a Retzev



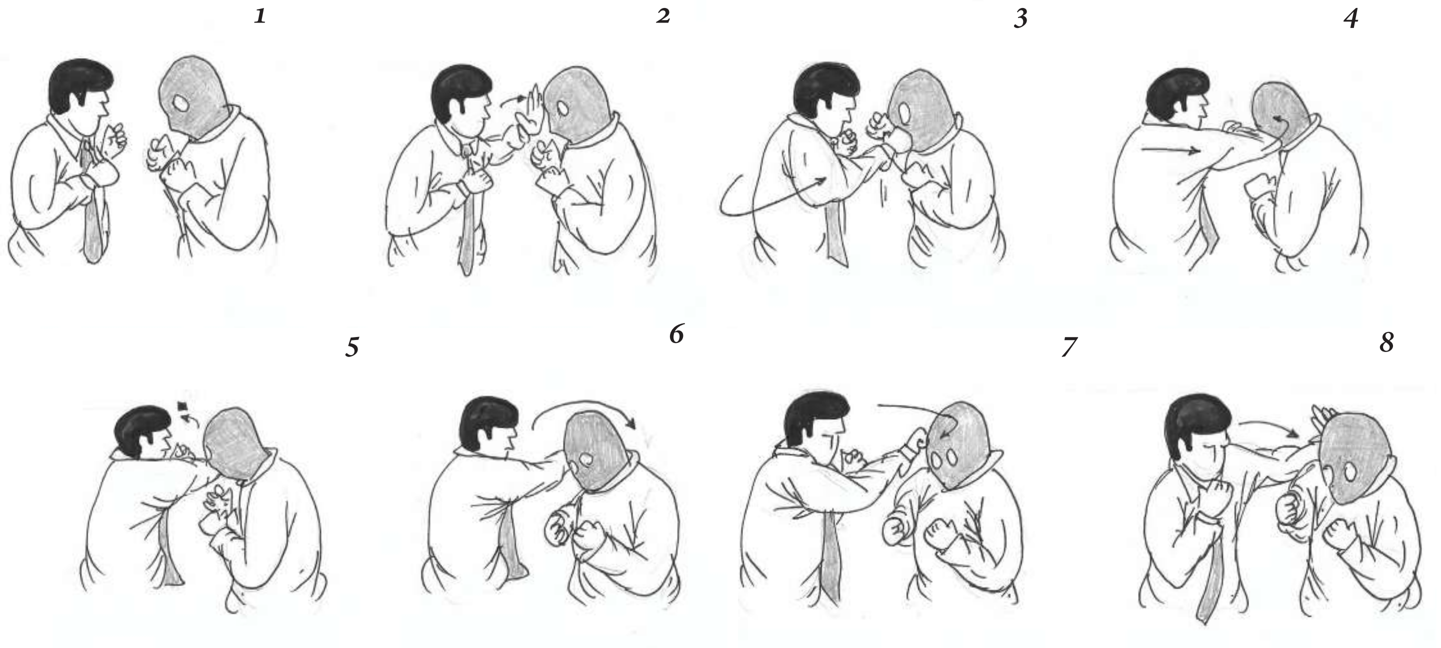
6.3 Natural Combinations

'Krav Maga Kicks' is crammed with **Natural Combinations**. The follow-up sequences after self-defense techniques are all *Retzev* based on **Natural Combinations**. The reader is invited to consult this previous book and drill the *Retzev* sequences presented independently from the techniques they are following.
But ultimately, after you have drilled all these sequences, the ideal **Natural Combinations** will be those that work for you. After lots of drilling and free fighting, patterns will emerge in your way to follow up and to link the techniques of the *Retzev*: it will be your body telling you what works best for you. Of course, that will not happen if you have not tried and drilled plenty of proven chains of techniques.
So, go for it. Drill them all, train hard and then start to develop your own preferences, most suitable to your physique and personality.

Just try to take into account **the important principle of Alternatio**n: try to alternate your strikes and to hit low after hitting high; and striking from the left after striking from the right. It is obvious (but still good to remind the reader) that a first strike will cause an instinctive reaction *whether it has succeeded or not*. An opponent hit in the face will lift his hands (and uncover his body and groin), and a circular attack to the left of the opponent will cause him to momentarily focus there (instead of his uncovered right side). Alternate hi and lo, in and out, straight and circular. Trivial, but remember the KISS principle…

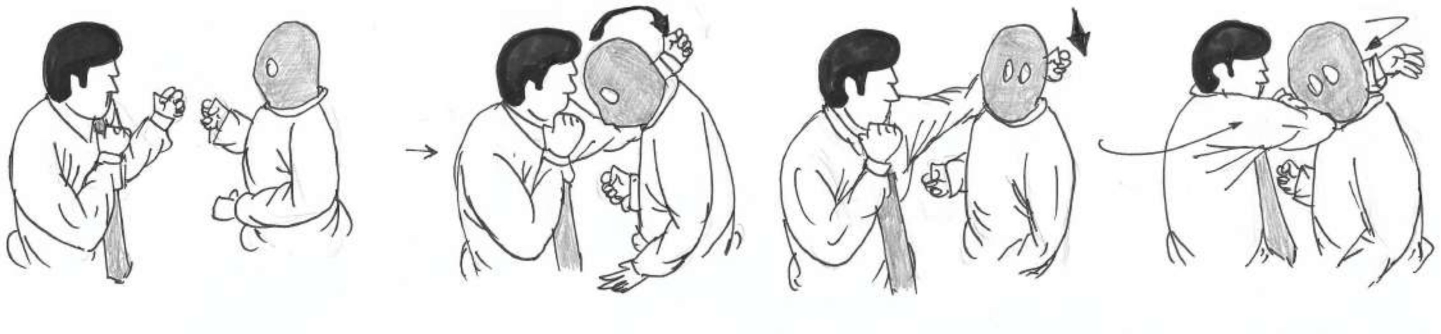
We are just going to add a few more sequences below. Try them too and keep working hard until your intuition directs you to what is most efficient for you. Then drill those even harder and focus on them for an automatic powerful response, even under stressful conditions.

The first sequence aims at using a continuous logical move of the upper limbs, each one fading into the next *naturally*. Jab his face with your palm and follow with a Hook from the other (rear) fist. Go *through* his head with the Hook while pushing your hips forward and hit him with your Elbow by simply folding the striking arm. As you have been 'through' his head with your hip-propelled elbow, you can now go back the way you came from and go through his head again with a Hammer-fist Outward Strike. Keep the momentum to conclude with a slap (Palm Strike) to his ear with the other hand (the one from the Jab). Of course, you could keep at it if necessary.This one is about ***Flow***!



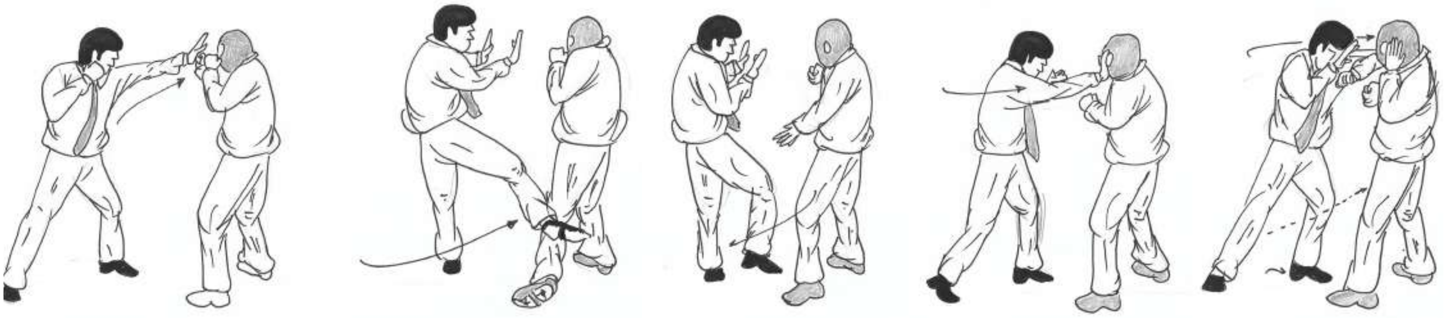
A flowing hand-striking combination starting with a simple Palm Jab

The next sequence is shorter, but can be completed in any way the reader fancies. You 'miss' a Jab by developing it beside the opponent's head, only to strike him with an ***Inward Forearm Strike*** to the side of the neck. The Forearm then pulls his head forward, towards your incoming hip-propelled Circular Elbow Strike. Aim for the throat, neck or nose. Follow up!



An Inward Forearm strike pulls the opponent head into a Circular Elbow

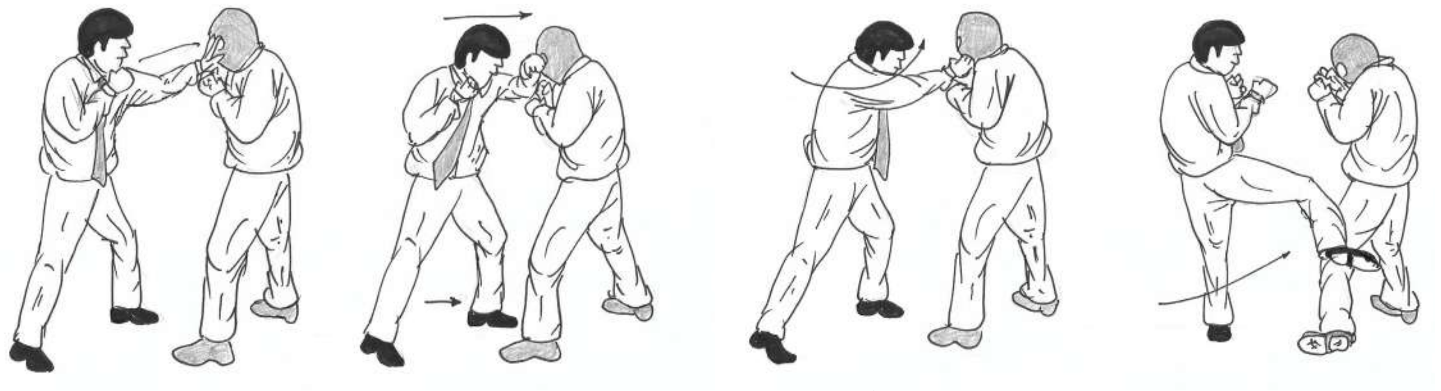
The next example starts with the simplest most classic opening. Simple but efficient! You jab with an open hand towards the opponent's eyes (**hi**) and make use of his reaction to low-kick his knee forcefully. As you have struck **low**, he will lower his hands and uncover his head for a (straight) rear-hand Palm Strike as the foot lands back and a Circular Elbow attack (**hi**). After these high strikes, why not a Knee to the groin (**lo**).



Start with a hi/lo classic; jab and low kick; then alternate high straight and circular, and back to low

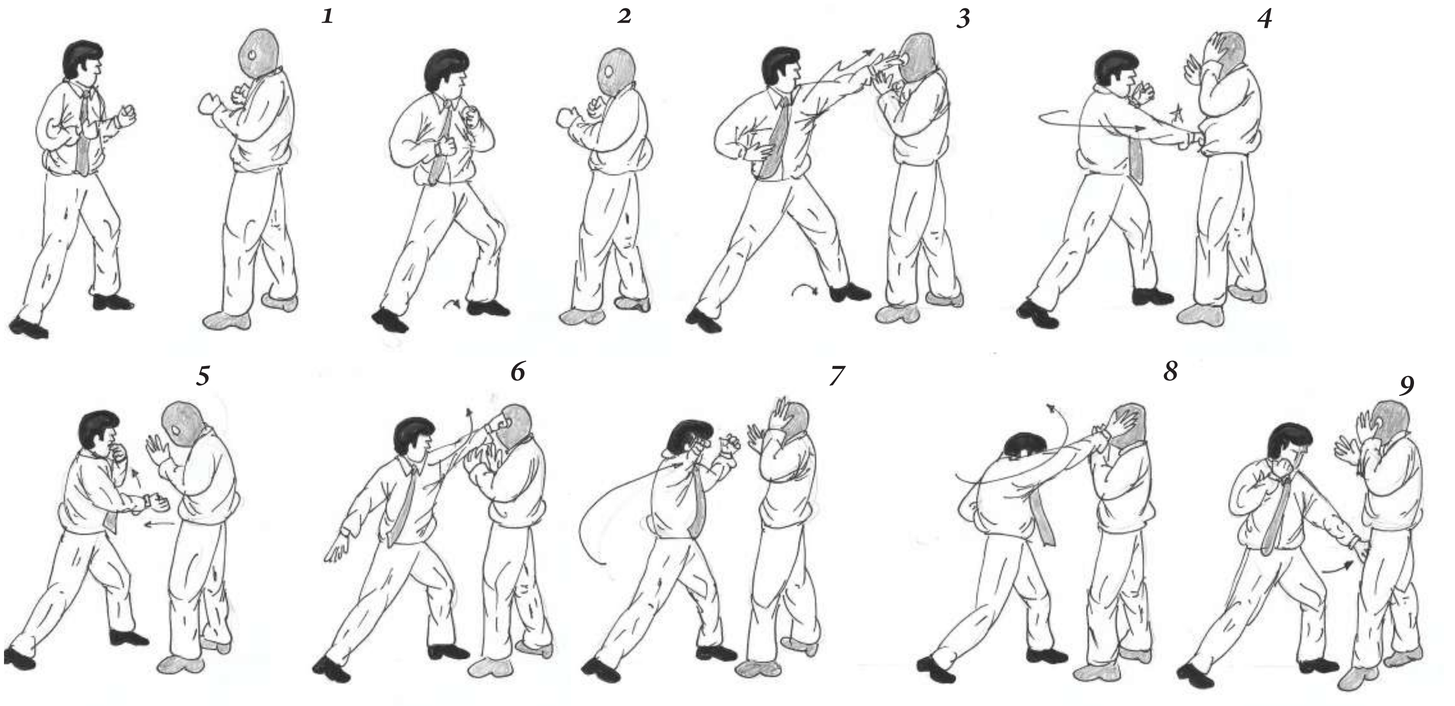
The next series, illustrated at the top of next page, shows the **use of the momentum of the initial lunge**. You jab the opponent's eyes and keep going forward while bending the arm. The Eye Jab turns *naturally* into a straight Forearm Strike to his nose; if he has lifted his hands to his face, you will hit him with his own hands. Follow up with a (mildly circular) Hook to the side of his head. It is then the time to alternate to the lower gates with a Low Kick to his knee. Keep at it if necessary.

➔



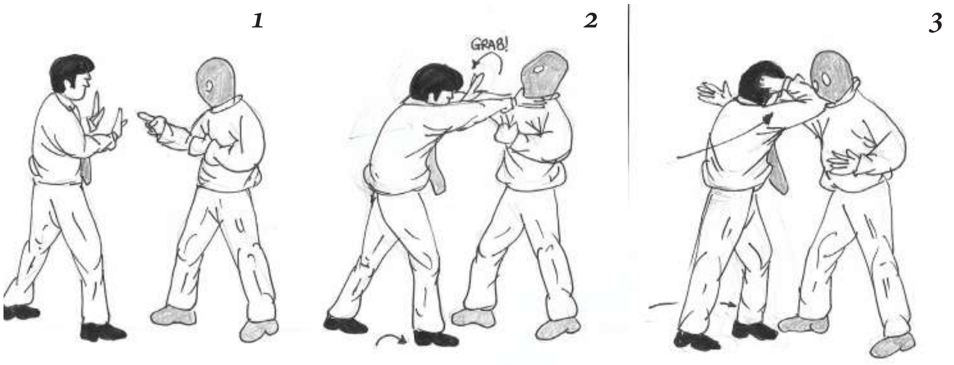
An Eye Jab turns into a straight Forearm Strike to the face, and starts a Retzev

The next example illustrates a nice **alternation flow**. It starts with the fantastic Lunging Eye Whipping technique, fast and relaxed. As the opponent cannot _not_ *lift* his hands you reverse-punch his gut to bring them back *down*. Follow up with a (*high*) Outwards Hammer-fist Strike to the side of his head from your front hand. This strike will naturally pull your rear hand in a momentum-powered slap (Palm Strike) to the same side of his head. Should he have his hands there, they will be violently smashed into his head. The other hand then comes back *low* to hit his (certainly) uncovered groin.

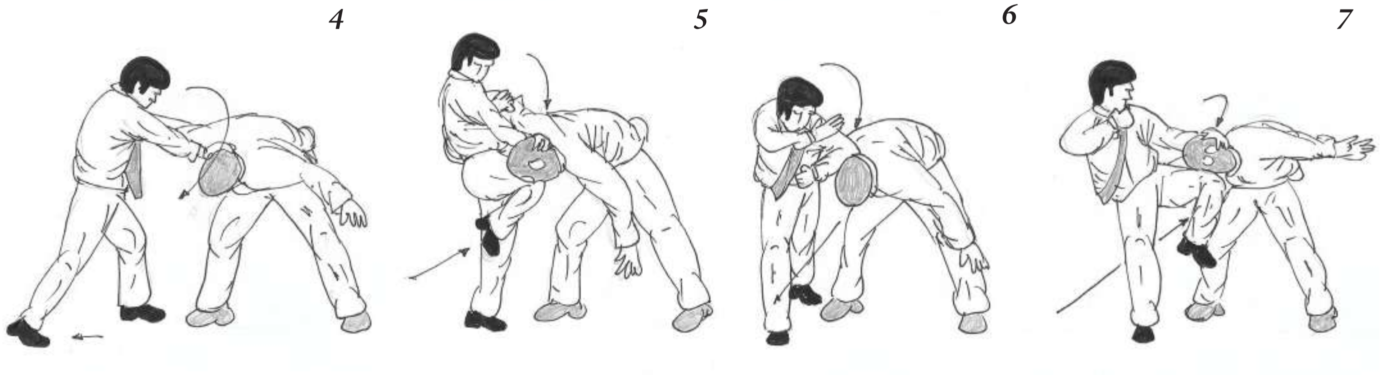


High, low, High In, High In, Low

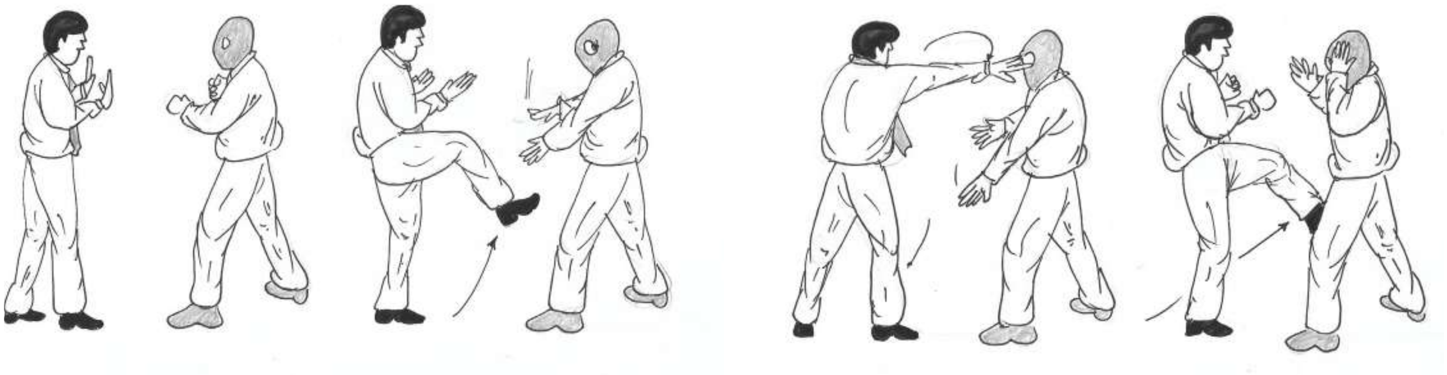
The next combination presented wants to underline the importance of the Knee Strike, and better, the ***Knee Strikes in series***. In the example below, you move aside and grab the brandished front hand of a threatening assailant. You do so all the while you are striking his throat with your front hand in 'tiger mouth' configuration (the webbed part between the thumb and index finger). Keep your forward momentum and fold your striking arm, so as to naturally flow into a Forward (and slightly upward) Elbow Strike to the neck. By naturally extending your arm, you will be able to catch his head from behind to lower it for a rear-leg Knee Strike. Downward-elbow his head while lowering your foot, and conclude with a second Knee Strike from the other leg (holding his head down).



Start by grabbing the opponent's front wrist and striking his throat, finish with two Knee Strikes to the face



We shall conclude with a last example that underlines the importance of **simplicity**. The *KISS* principle and the '*Retzev*' principle are probably the most important tenets of *Krav Maga*. The Drawings at the top of next page illustrate how you lift your front leg fast towards the opponent's groin. No need for power or complicated set-ups: the purpose is to get the opponent to *lower* his hands and focus down. You then throw a long, relaxed and super-fast Eye Rake (or Eye Whip). If you are fast and committed, you cannot miss with this simple maneuver. Attacking his eyes will certainly cause him to *lift his hands back*. You can now truly go for a Groin Kick that he will not see coming.



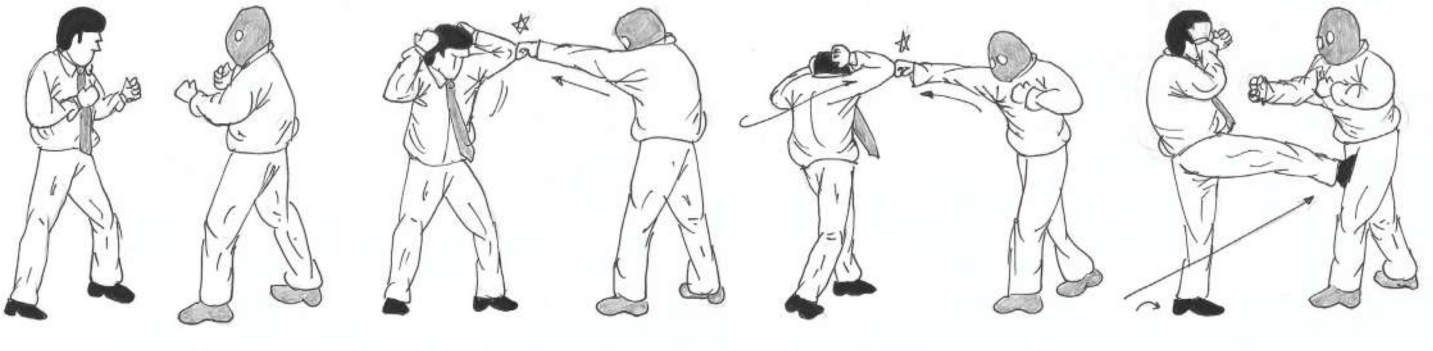
KISS: Fake Groin Kick will allow for an easy Eye Rake; then a real Groin kick

6.4 Special Techniques

This section will deal with difficult to classify techniques, mostly offensive. These are of various types, but generally more sophisticated than the basic techniques described in the previous Chapters and in our previous book about *Krav Maga Kicks*. These techniques do require thorough drilling and free fighting experience, but being nastily efficient, they are a must for the Advanced *Kravist*.
Here they come:

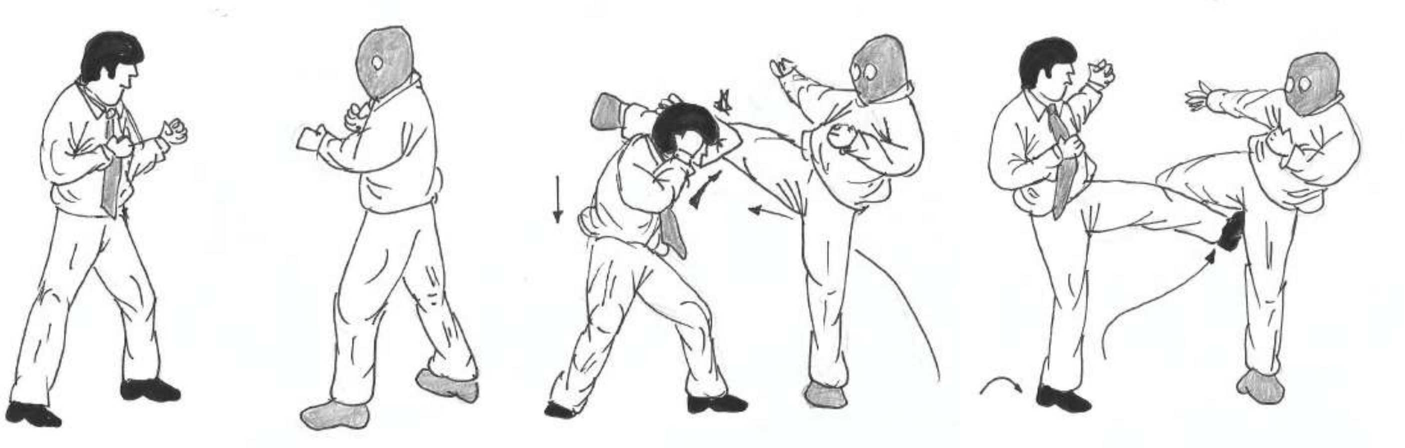
6.4.1 The Elbow Strike Block

This is a sophisticated technique, not easy to execute, but very much in the spirit of *Krav Maga*: an offensive Block. Defending with an aggressive technique is what *Krav Maga* is all about!
The assailant attacks you with a punch; instead of reaching a soft target, his knuckles will connect with the tip of your elbow. This is painful and can cause serious fingers damage. Of course, you'll then follow up with your own strikes and kicks all the way to submission.
The Illustrations at the top of next page show a great way to drill the technique and make very clear what the maneuver is all about. You catch your partner's Jab on the tip of your elbow, and then his following Cross with the tip of the other elbow. Follow up with a Groin Kick. Be careful in practice and have your partner wear protecting boxing gloves.
Of course, the example presented is just a drill. In combat, you probably would not use the technique in series against a left/right punching attack. In fact, one of the primary advantages of this special technique is its effect of surprise.



Have the opponent crush his own attacking fingers on your elbow tip

The principle of the technique can also work against High Kicks. The Drawings below illustrate the use of the '**Elbow Tip Block**' against the knee or shin of an incoming Roundhouse Kick. Ouch... Follow up with a Groin Kick and start a *Retzev*.



Let the kicking opponent's shin meet the tip of your elbow

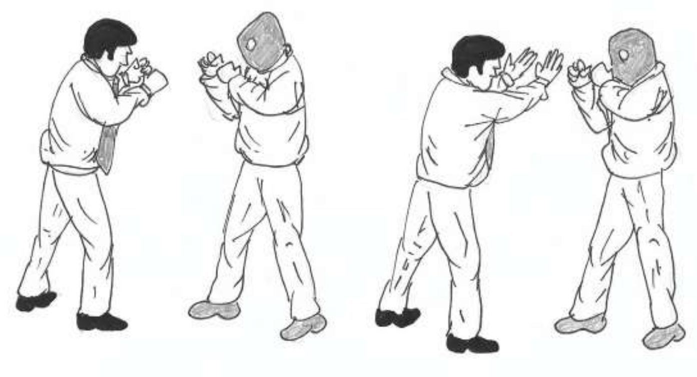
In *Krav Maga*, it is always preferable to lunge to preempt an attack or to stop it in its early development. But if you are late and have to block, then this is a very fast and painful way to do it. The technique requires drilling though, and serious work is needed.

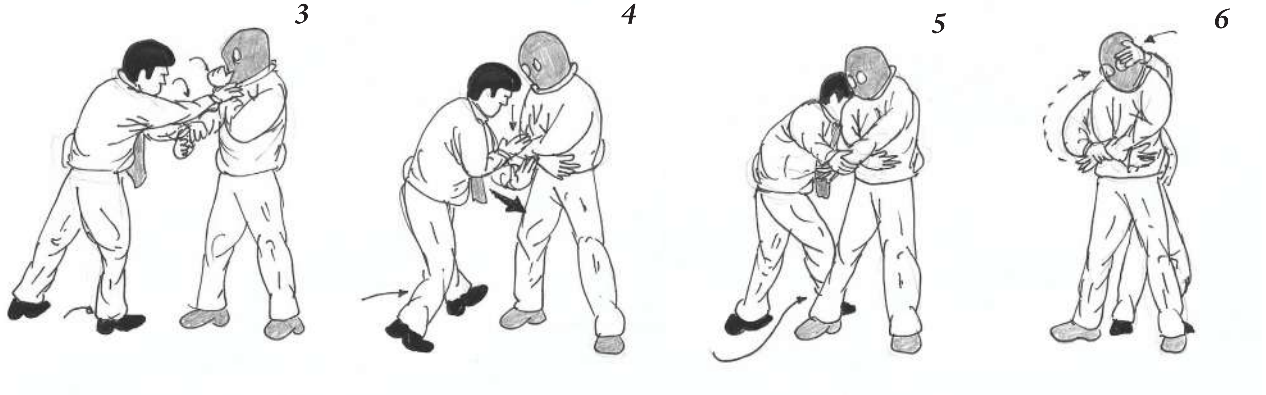
→

Danger, if met head on, can be nearly halved
~Winston Churchill

6.4.2 The Tying-up Guard-closing Techniques

These are sophisticated **Guard Neutralization** maneuvers *that go further* than the regular techniques presented before. In this case, you lunge and grab the opponent's guarding hands just like before, but, instead of directly going for a Strike, *you will tie his arms together* to allow for more control and a more effective follow-up. This is against, a complex technique principle, to be reserved for advanced *Kravists*. These moves require serious drilling with resisting partners to make them viable in stressful combat. But they are very effective techniques that are relatively easy to execute when mastered. In our first example, you lunge for a regular Guard Neutralization technique as presented in the relevant section. But, once you have been able to cover his lowered front hand with his rear forearm, you keep the hold on to slip behind him. You find yourself behind him while neutralizing both his hands! Go for his eyes from behind and start your *Retzev*: he is totally at your mercy.

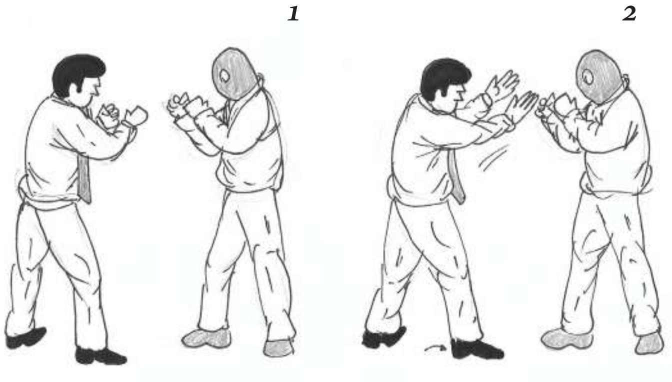




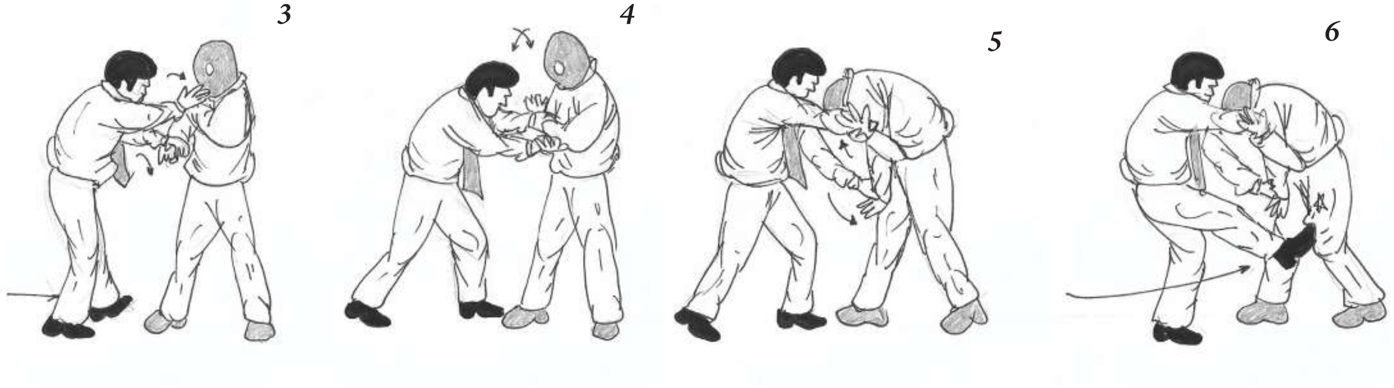
Go for his guarding hands, tie them together and get his back

The second example illustrates, at the top of next page, a **Crossed-armed Armlock** (classically coming all the way to Israel from Japanese *Aiki-jitsu*). You start like for the previous technique, but now get hold firmly of both wrists. You will then use his front arm to block the elbow of his straightened rear arm. You have him in a painful Armlock that must be applied *violently and jerkily*, in order to damage the joints. As you have his arms neutralized, start to kick him in the shins and, if possible, the groin. After a few kicks, you can brusquely release your hold for an immediate all-out *Retzev*.

➤



Neutralize his guard and tie his arms in a painful self-inflicted crossed-arms Armlock; follow up



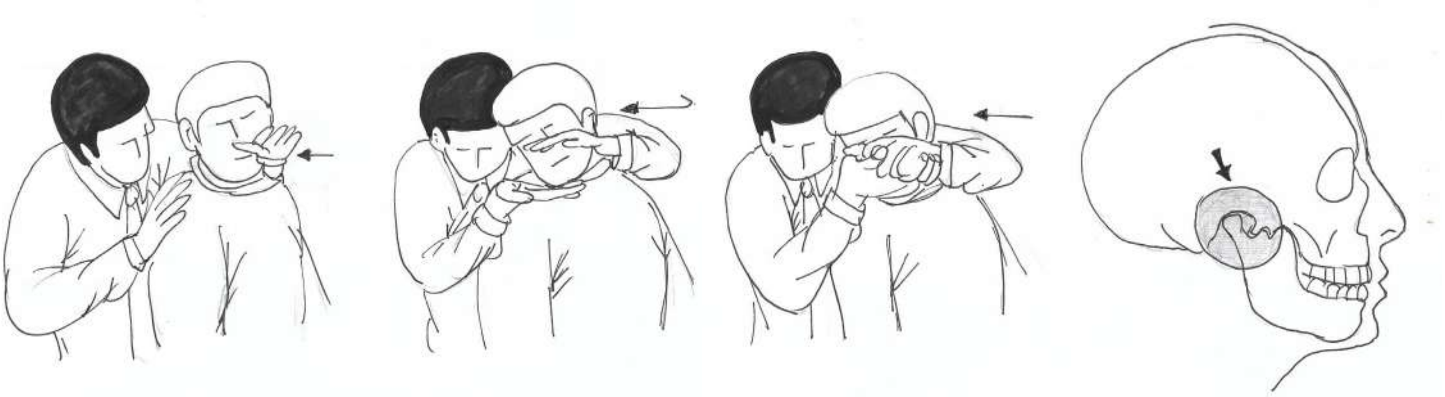
6.4.3 The Jaw Lock

Mastering the **Jaw Lock** is very important for the advanced fighter: it is an important fall-back technique if you miss the set-up of a *Rear Naked Choke*. The technique is relatively easy to master. If you drill it a few times, you will get the principle and the right set-up. But what is important is to drill it enough to make it automatic in case of need.

The Drawings at the top of next page will make the maneuver very clear: you will use your Inner Wrist to crush his *Temporomandibular Joint* in an area replete with nerve endings (it is the joint connecting the jaw and the skull). This is very painful, and, done violently, can cause the joint to dislocate or at least to go into subluxation. As always in real-life *Krav Maga*, it must be executed brusquely and violently: you get into the hold as a Strike to the side of the Jaw and then use the clasping hands as a powerful vise. Searing Pain to the area radiates all the way to the ear and can also cause a lingering loss of balance.

Of course, if you can get the Rear Naked Choke instead, it still should be the preferred option…

➔



The Jaw Lock and the targeted joint

6.4.4 Finger Locks

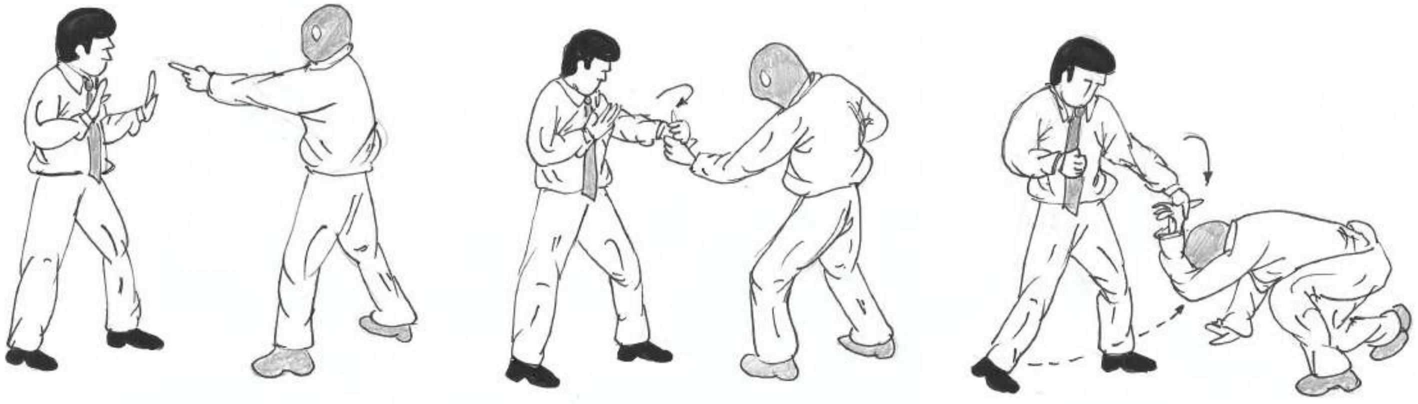
Finger Locks are easy to understand and to execute. Unfortunately, they are used too seldom, as people do not drill them enough to have it come out naturally in stressful combat. It is a pity, because they are sooooo easy and soooo effective. They are fast, they neutralize the opponent immediately, they cause excruciating pain, they can cause joint damage that will take the specific limb out of use for the fight and, above all, they allow for the easy start of devastating *Retzev*. What is not to like?

You simply grab one or several fingers and bend them violently, one way or another. We will show a few representative examples, but this is certainly not exhaustive. Grab one or several fingers and find a way to treat it unnaturally; simple and easy.

Of course, this is not only a mid-distance technique. If you are in close combat and get grabbed, hold or choked, you should immediately go for one finger and aim at breaking it.

Drill these techniques and try to keep in mind their effectiveness. Make sure you familiarize yourself to the idea of breaking someone's finger if he attacks you. It is not always easy to contemplate for a law-abiding normative citizen; but it is sometimes necessary...

The first example (illustrated at the top of next page) is very simple to the point of ridicule. A threatening assailant points a finger at you while assaulting you verbally. As he gets close and his intentions are clear, you simply preempt his attack by grabbing his threatening finger and bending it back towards the back of his hand. You can execute the technique gradually or brusquely according to the situation. A gradual lock will have him controlled, and a violent jerk will also break his finger and put his main arm out of commission. It is clear that the crouching position the opponent ends in, is perfect for a kick to the face and whatever will follow.



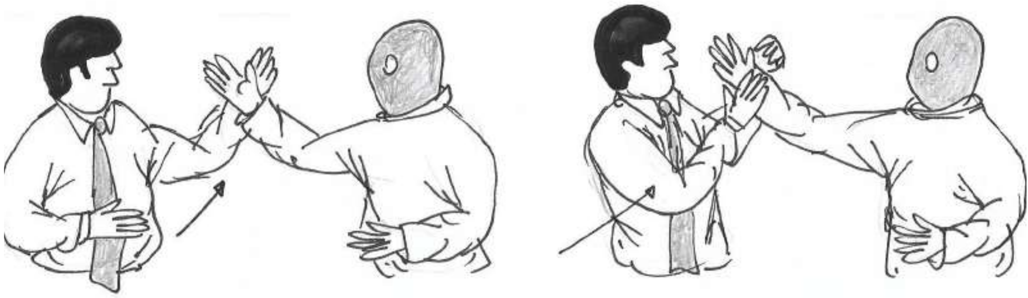
Grab a finger pointed at you and bend it back; then kick

Another devastating attack of the opponent's fingers is the **dislocation of the hand**. The purpose here is truly to place his hand out of commission for the fight. This can be required, for example, to make sure that an aggressor cannot take up a weapon to keep on fighting. Or simply to ensure that the will to fight leaves the opponent.

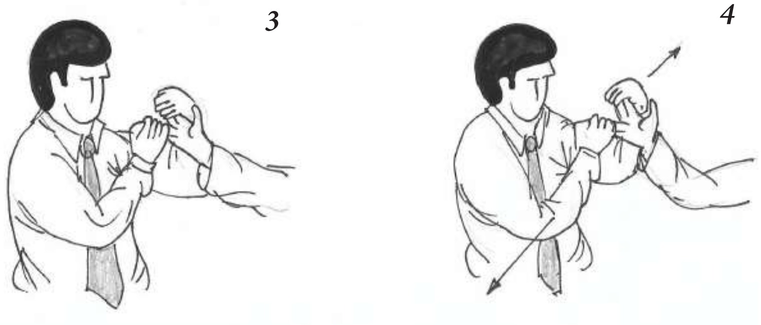
The principle is, again, very simple: grab the index and middle finger of the opponent with one hand; then grab the ring finger and the pinky with your other hand; then *tear them apart*!

The best way to execute the technique is to grab the opponent's wrist to allow the easy grab of the first pair of fingers. As soon as the fingers are controlled, you release the wrist to go for the other two fingers. Pull them immediately and *violently* apart, as if you want to tear the hand in two. This is not really a control technique but a destructive attack: go fast and brusque, and follow up.

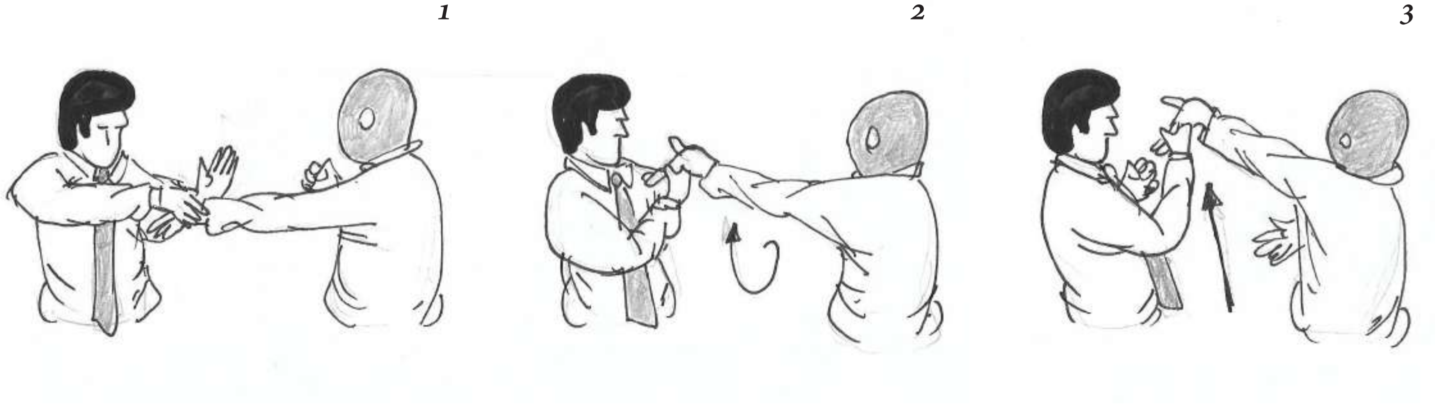
We present the maneuver against an opponent extending his hand towards you, but it can easily be executed in nearly all relative positions possible.



Grab two fingers with each hand and tear them apart



Our last example shows how to grab all four fingers of a hand coming towards you, twist the palm up and then lift the hand brusquely up while bending the fingers back towards the opponent. Follow up immediately with strikes to vital points (*not illustrated*).



Catch fingers, twist up, bend fingers back, strike

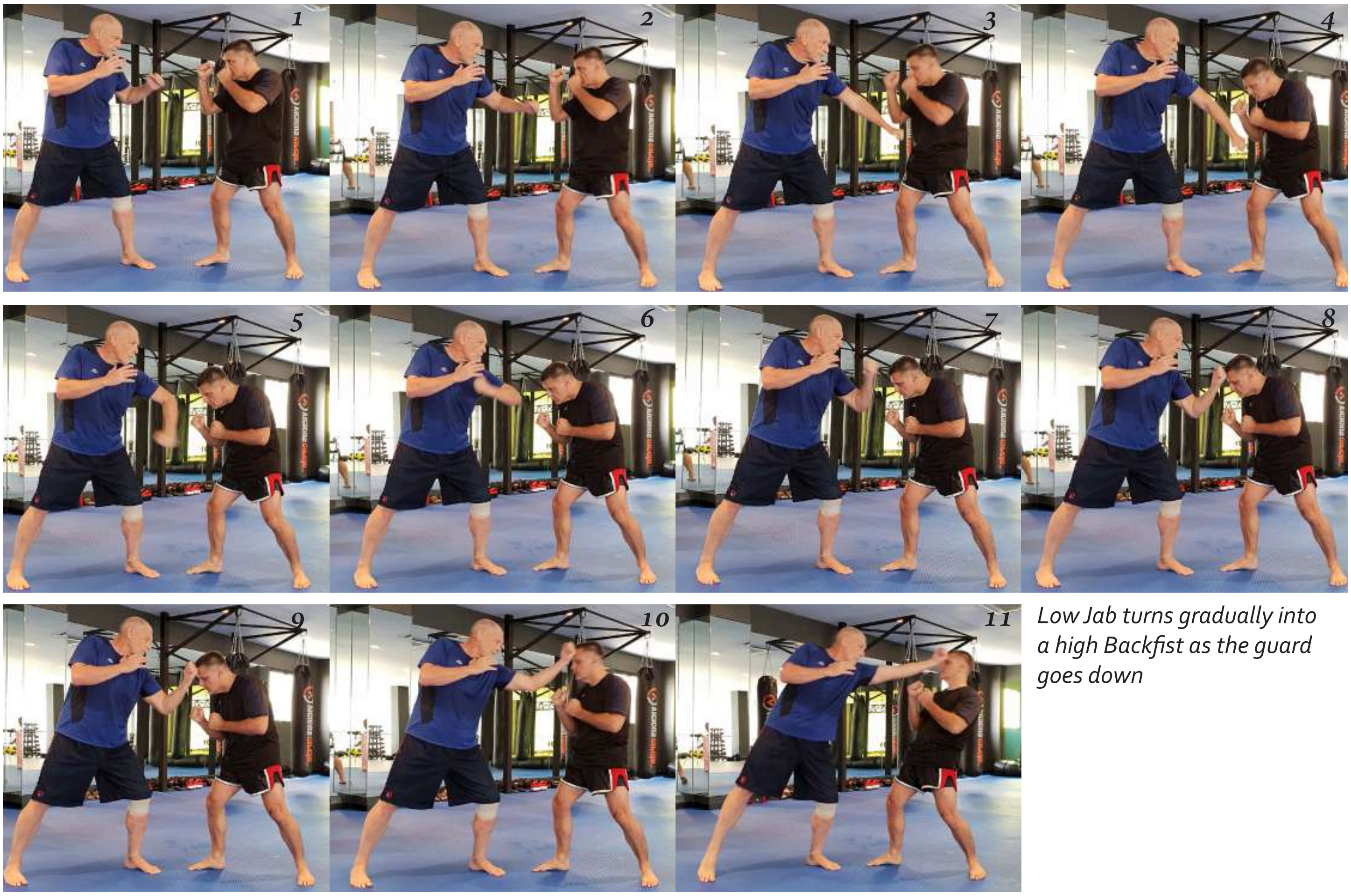
Fingers dislocations are easy and effective, and therefore certainly *Krav Maga* material. It is always best to grab only one finger, if possible, and shake it up. Go for it if necessary.

6.4.5 Surprise Strikes

These techniques are basically **Feinting Strikes** with the upper limbs. They are easy to understand and exist in considerable numbers. We shall give a few examples only and let the reader develop his own feints according to his affinities and his best finishing techniques.

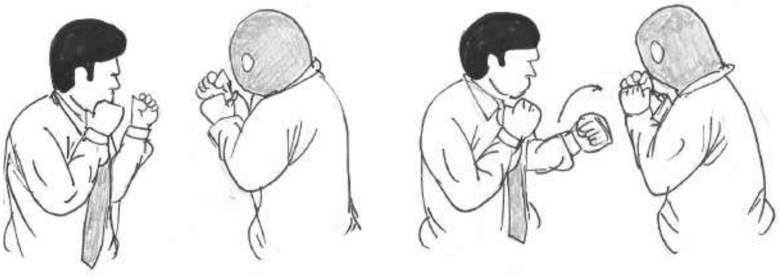
My personal favorite is the *Low Jab turning into a High Backfist* after causing the opponent to lower his guard. You aim the convincing Jab towards the solar plexus or (preferably) the groin according to the circumstances and gradually change the trajectory in what is called a **Progressive Indirect Attack**. See Photos at the top of next page. Follow up after the Backfist connects.

➤

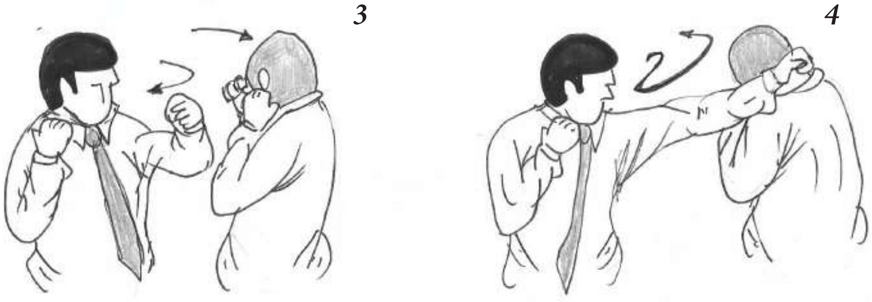


Low Jab turns gradually into a high Backfist as the guard goes down

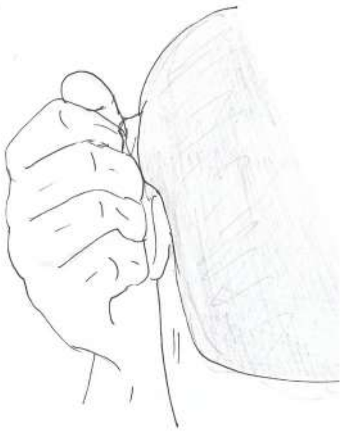
Another simple example is the *'too-short' Hook Feint that turns into an Outside Forearm or Hammer-fist Strike*. The principle is very simple, but make sure the transition between the strikes is smooth and progressive.

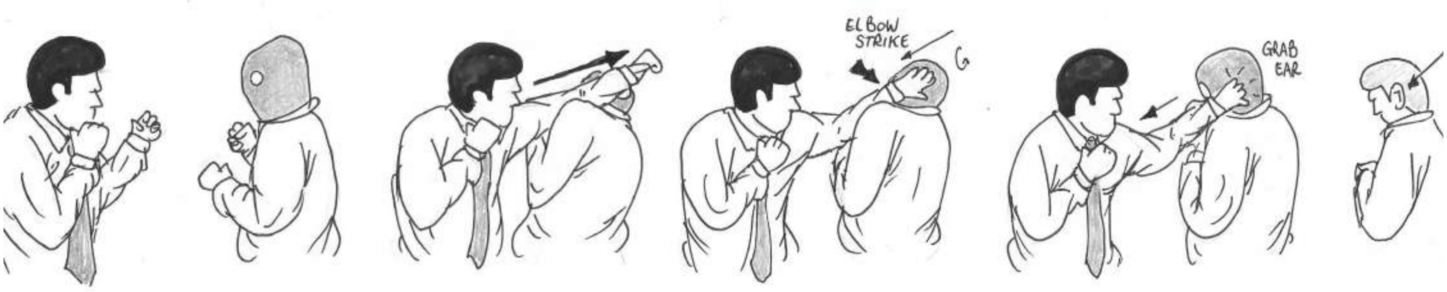


Hook Punch Feint turns into unexpected Outside Forearm Strike to the neck from the opposite direction



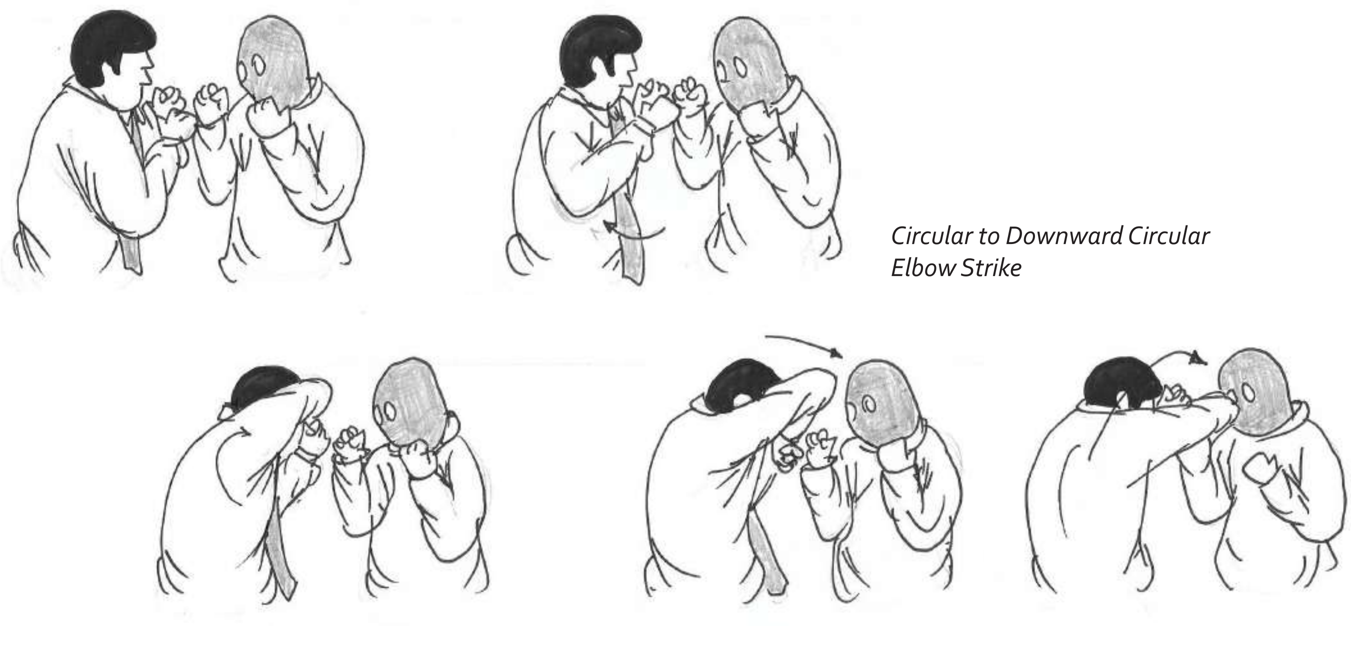
The next example is more compounded and aimed at showing that **all techniques are legitimate in self-defense**. The maneuver can be fully offensive or can be a 'save' if you have missed a Jab because of a lateral head movement of the opponent. You either jab outside the opponent's head on purpose, or you find yourself in this position because he has successfully moved his head sideways. The following is based on compounding two movements: (**1**) you bend the arm while hitting him with the elbow and the forearm on your way back. And (**2**) you grab his ear when your hand gets in position. As the movement is uninterrupted, you pull his ear out, which is extremely painful and places him in a very vulnerable position for your following strikes.





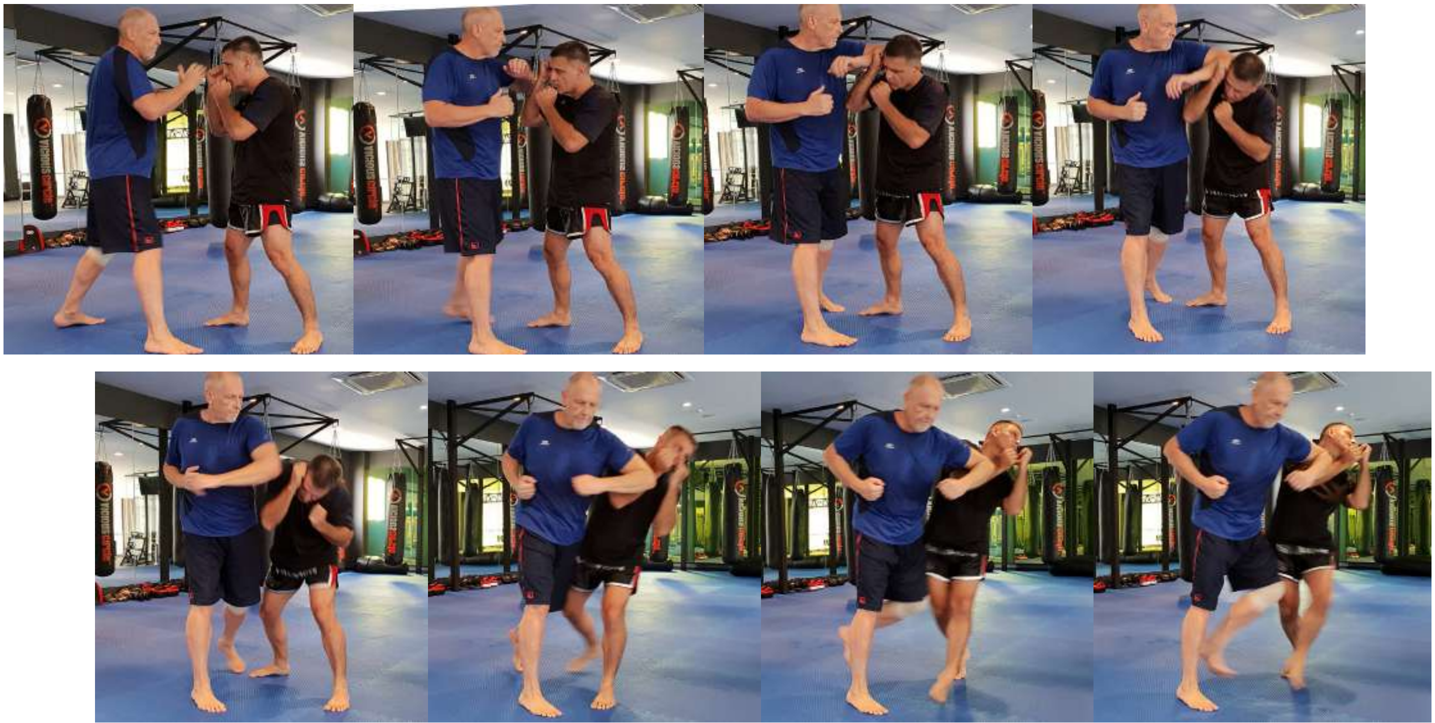
Missed Jab turns into an Elbow Strike and an Ear Grab

The next example shows how to turn what looks like a *Circular Elbow Strike into a Downward one* that will come from above the opponent's guarding hands.



Circular to Downward Circular Elbow Strike

Our last example, illustrated by the Photos below, is the simple *Inward Circular Elbow Strike through the opponent's guard and head, that turns back into an Outward Elbow Strike* through the offered head. You crash through the guard to come back with the power of the hips. Simple but very effective!



Circular Elbow Strike: in and back

The practicing reader will come up easily with 'Surprise Strikes' of this type that will suit his psychology, his personality and his preferred techniques. It is important to drill them thoroughly, then shadow-box them, then drill with a partner and then try them often in free-fighting.

Hard work beats talent when talent does not work hard.
~Tim Notke

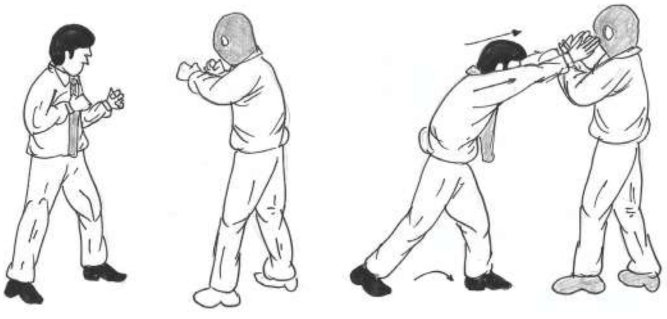
6.4.6 Rear Naked Choke Set-up

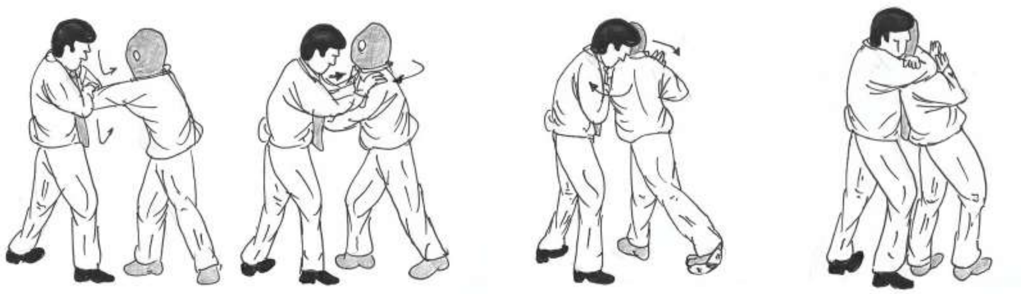
The **Rear Naked Choke** is an extremely effective technique, and probably one of the few that will work against a pain-impervious attacker. In some real world situation, you can meet opponents who do not feel pain at all, no matter where and how hard you strike. This can be the result of drugs, of alcohol intoxication, of mental illness, of genetics or of very high stress levels. In these cases, your options are extremely limited: a blood choke or breaking his joints to immobilize him. The author has personally witnessed the use of a choke to control such a crazed assailant at a crowd event; the choke came after him having assaulted several people and absorbed without any problems incredible punishment from very strong security agents. Only the choke worked (It came out later that the person was in fact a Schizophrenic off his meds).

The only thing to bear in mind though, is that choking an opponent works *only if he is alone* and there is no danger to be attacked from the back by an accomplice. It is still recommended to try to bring your back to a nearby wall once you have the Choke set up. In this way, you protect your rear while having him in front of you as a shield for the few dozens of seconds needed to have him pass out. Release then immediately to prevent any permanent damage or even death. The Choke is briefly described in '*Krav Maga Kicks*', and here are a few ways to 'get to the choke' from the start.

Of course, it will be easier to set up the choke after a serious *Retzev* has mollified the opponent and placed him in the optimal relative position (behind him). But if you want to go for the choke from the start, here are two options worth drilling.

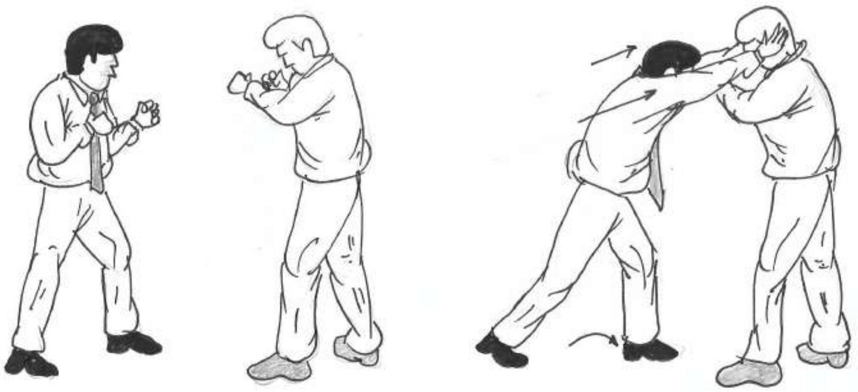
In our first example, you explode-lunge towards the opponent in a classic *Guard Neutralization* move. Go for both his guarding hands and lower them with a powerful slap. Both your attacking hands climb then back up at shoulder level. One hand will violently slap a shoulder back while the other one will grab the other shoulder to pull it forward. This will cause the forced pivot of the opponent into a position where placing the Choke is natural and easy.

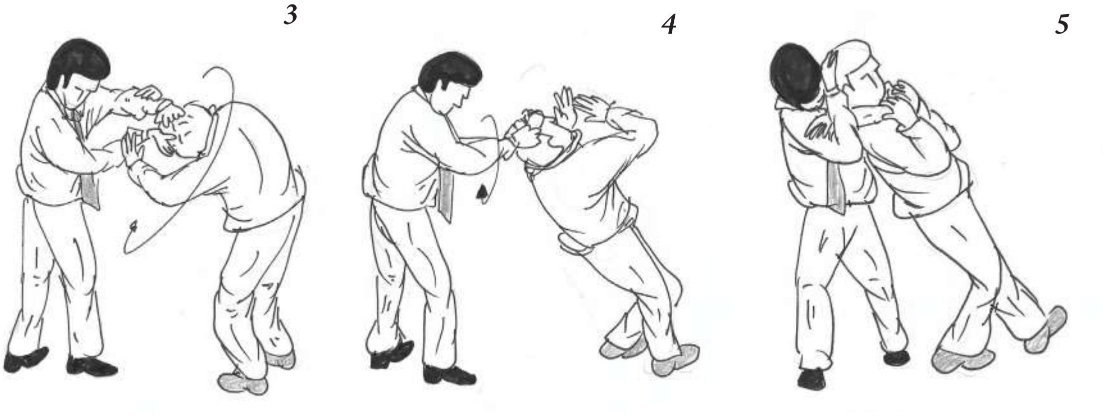




Dive towards the opponent and use his shoulders to twist him into Choke position

The next technique presented is very efficient, but it does not work on bald opponents! Lunge with open hands towards the opponent's head. You can thumb his eyes or slap his ears on the way, but the real end-purpose is *to grab his hair with both hands*. Once you have grabbed the hair, immediately pull violently while twisting his head. Once he presents his back (in a serious off-balance position), release one hand to encircle his throat while pulling his hair with the other to keep his chin up. Then, set up the Choke.





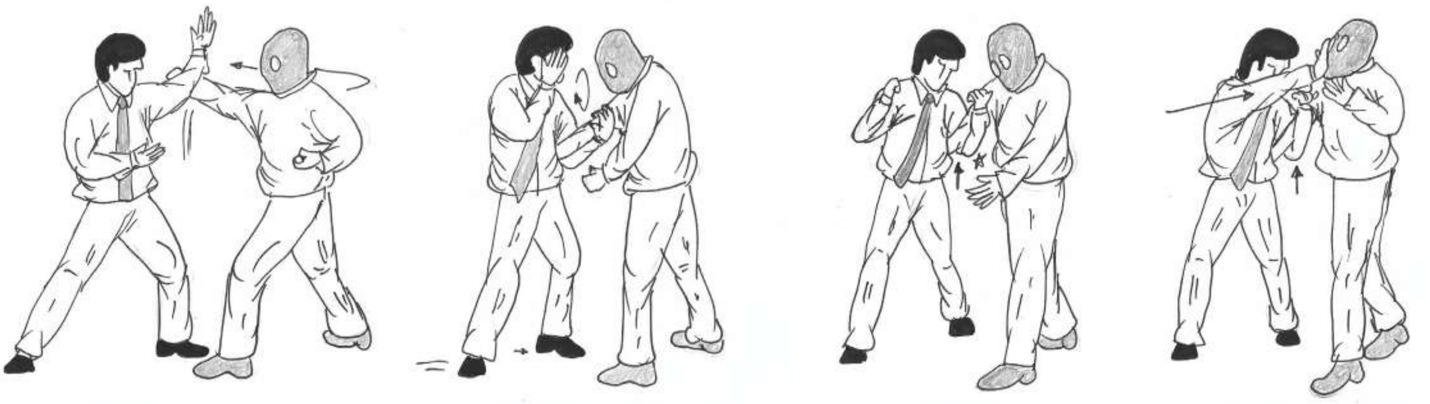
Use a hair grab to force the opponent to turn his back on you

6.4.7 Elbow Destructions

These special techniques are designed to cause joint damage in order to neutralize the assailant's arm. By doing this, you aim at preventing the aggressive use of the specific limb for the rest of the fight. This kind of technique is good to use if the opponent holds a weapon, or could do so. It is also appropriate in situation where the attacker looks non-responsive to pain (See Rear Naked Choke above). In attacking the joints violently, you will be able to prevent him to strike, to use a weapon or even to move.
The principle of this technique is simple: extend (or hyperextend) the opponent's arm, and strike the elbow while pulling the wrist. This is not to be confused for an Arm-lock which is used to inflict pain in order to *control* an assailant. Hard-core *Krav Maga* is not about control but about victory. By holding someone in an Arm-lock you place yourself at risk: from the opponent himself, if you make a mistake while being so close, or from an accomplice…

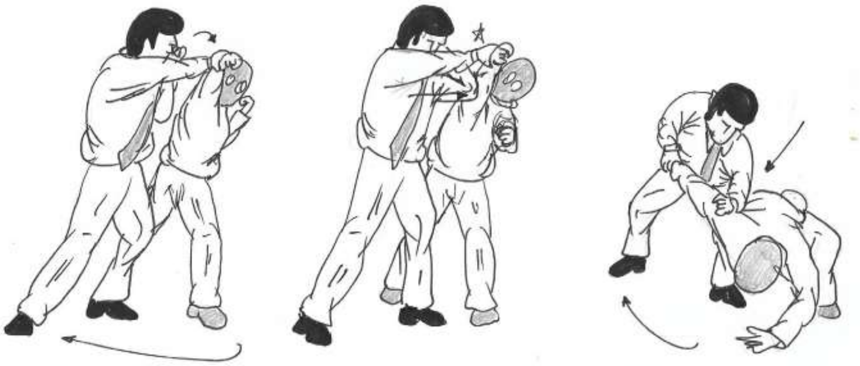
We shall present a few ways to set up the maneuver:

In the first example, you go forward to control and **encircle** a Haywire Punch (or Stick Strike). Once the opponent's forearm is under your armpit, strike violently his extended elbow from below with your inner elbow. Keep the pressure up on his locked elbow while attacking his face with the other hand; a Palm Strike to the nose or an Eye Attack will do. Start your *Retzev*, preferably by targeting his groin while he concentrates on his locked arm and his painful face.



The classic Encircling Elbow Attack

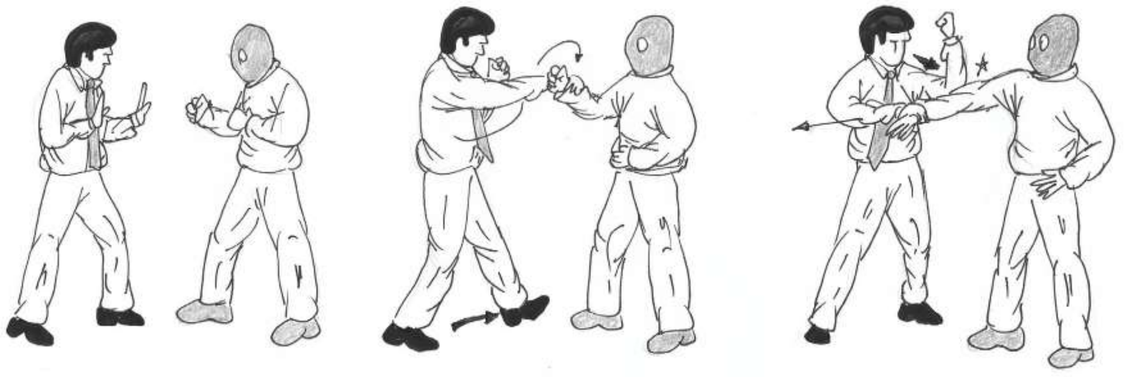
The next Illustrations show the simple **Elbow Strike to the extended elbow**. You get in position by evading out of a straight punch, grabbing the wrist and striking *through* the elbow. Pull the wrist simultaneously for maximum damage, and keep the pressure to lower the assailant to the ground in classic Armlock position. Do not stay there in Arm-lock position, but start your *Retzev*, preferably with a kick to the face.



Keep It Simple, Stupid: Grab his punching wrist and strike the elbow

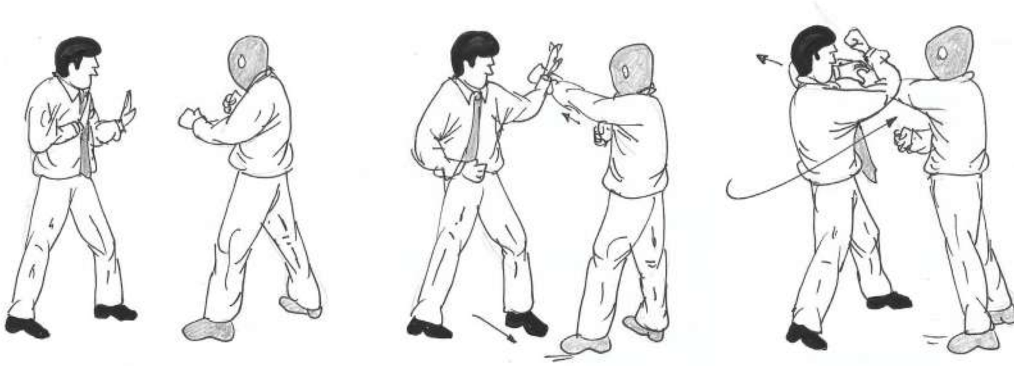
The next Drawings, at the top of next page, illustrate **the offensive version** of the previous technique, in opposite stances. You lunge slightly outwards to control his guard by grabbing is front hand with your rear one. Pull his wrist and strike his elbow.

➔



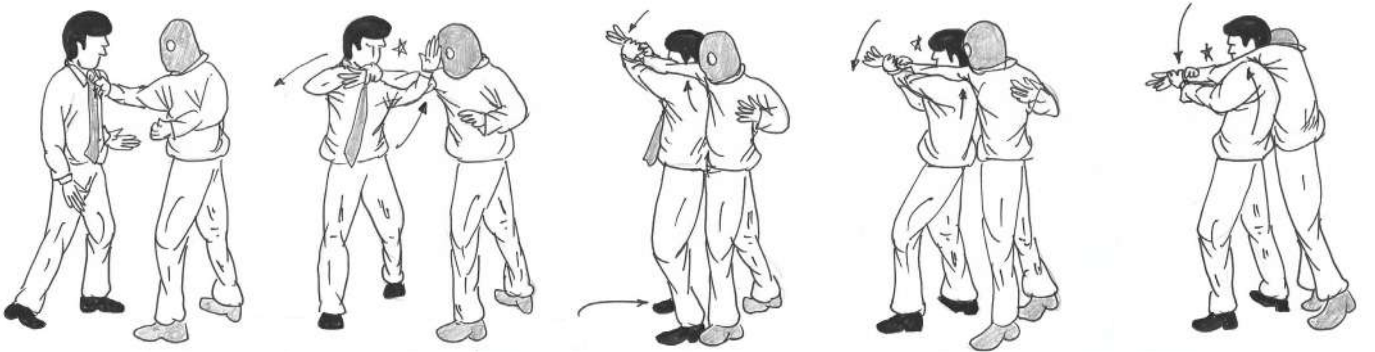
Offensive Elbow Destruction from opposite guards

The next Figures show the same technique from same stances. It can be *offensive* by guard neutralization or *defensive* if the opponent starts a jab. In these relative positions, you would lunge slightly inwards.



The simple Elbow Destruction from same stances

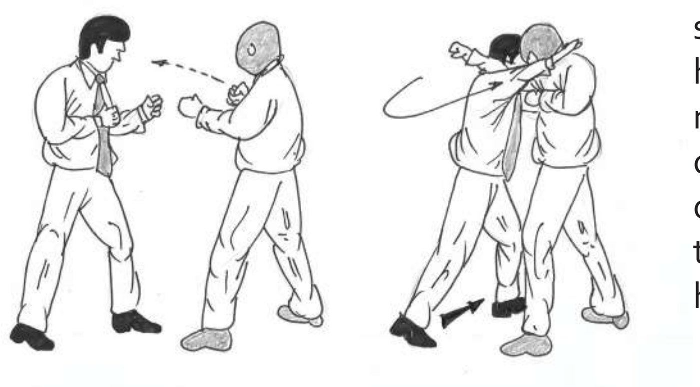
Another way to execute the destruction is **to use the shoulder as a fulcrum**. The next example starts from a threatening lapel-grabbing attack. Grab his grabbing hand and pivot while extending his arm. Hit up simultaneously with your inner elbow; make sure you twist his wrist to present his elbow to the strike. Keep pivoting (with your back to him) to place his elbow over your shoulder while you grab his same wrist with the other hand. Pull the wrist down violently while lifting the shoulder. This is *not* a Takedown or an Armlock: do not execute this gradually. You must execute *fast and jerkily* to hurt the joint. See this as a strike. Once you have hurt his joint, follow up immediately, for example with a Rear Elbow strike and a Back Groin Kick. Do not procrastinate, as you have your back to him.

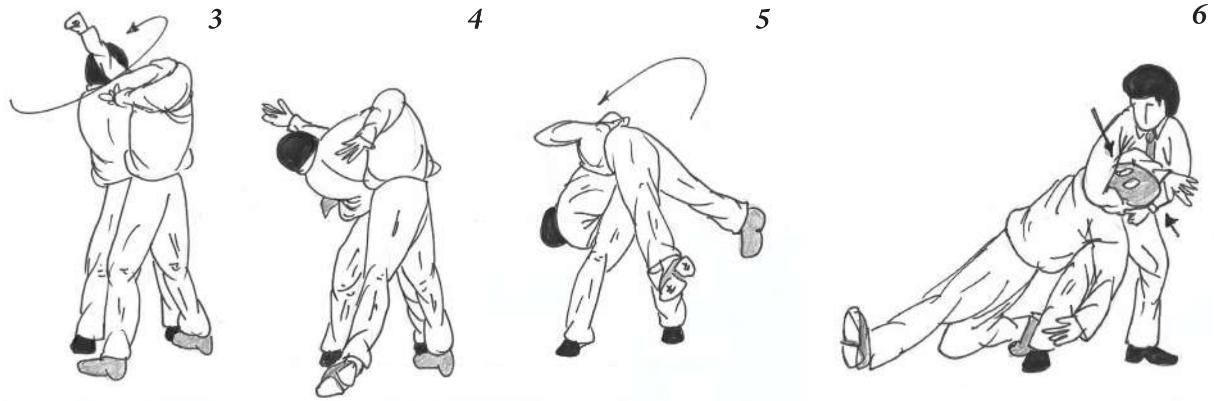


Break his elbow joint over your shoulder

6.4.8 The Side Neck Lock

The **Side Neck Lock** is fast, easy and very painful. It was one of *Master Sidney Faige* favorite techniques that he had mastered to perfection. It is kind of a Blood Choke, not as effective as the Rear Naked Choke, but easier to set up. It allows for great follow-ups. The principle is that you use your bony inner wrist to compress one carotid, and you use the opponent's own shoulder to compress the other. The general compression will also restrict the breathing, and the hacking bony press of the wrist will cause excruciating pain.
The technique lends itself to a set-up in the form of a *clothesline counter* under the opponent's arm. The Figures below illustrate how you evade forward and out on a Cross Punch, while you hit his neck (clothesline-style) with the inside forearm. Clasp your hands while pushing his shoulder into his neck with your own shoulder and head. In our example, you use the Lock to throw him over your hip. Keep control of the neck as he tumbles over. His body weight will make the hold even more painful.

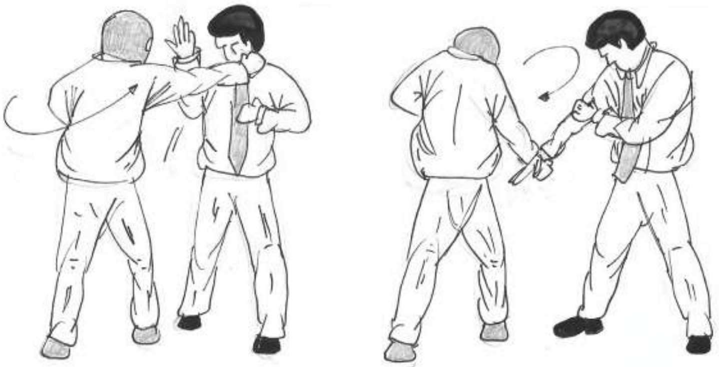




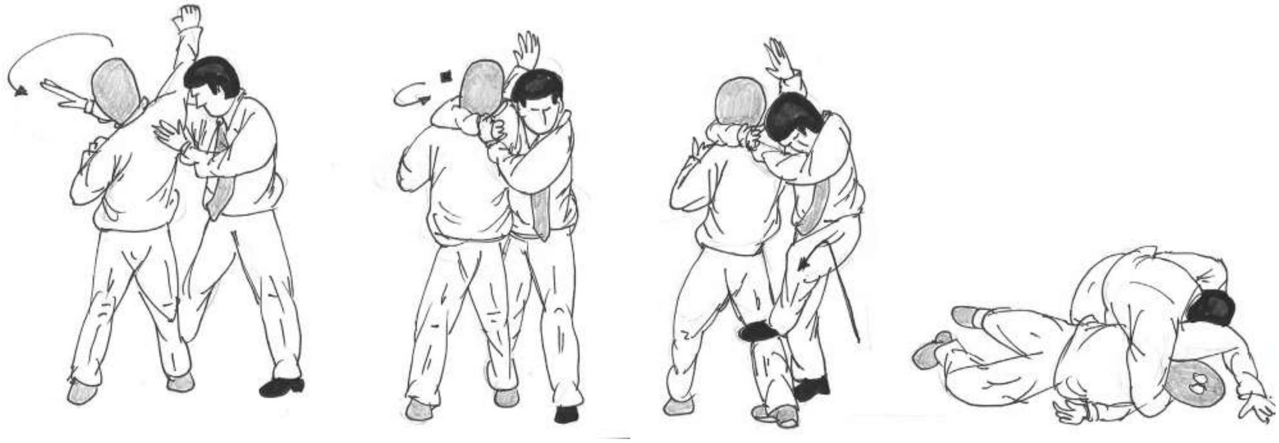
Evade a Cross Punch and set the painful Side Neck Lock for a half-takedown follow-up

The other example will deal with a Jab attack: block and encircle the attacking arm to get in position for the **Side Neck Lock**. Squeeze and use a Stomp to the back of the knee to bring him down. Go with him to the ground, if he is alone, where the side control gives you total dominance. See Drawings at the top of next page.

➡



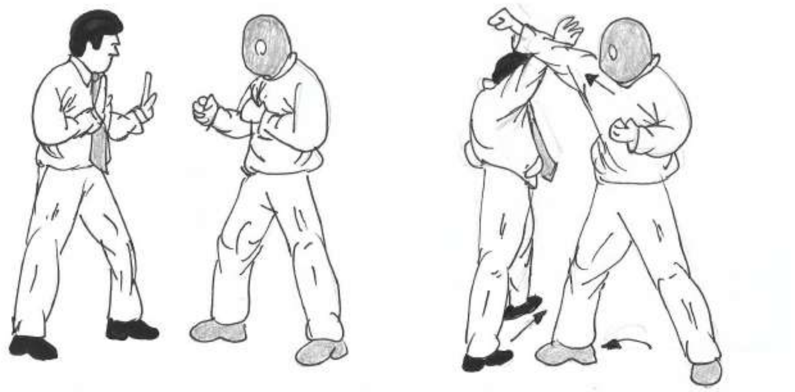
Circle a Jab to set up the Lock, get him to the ground with a Stomp

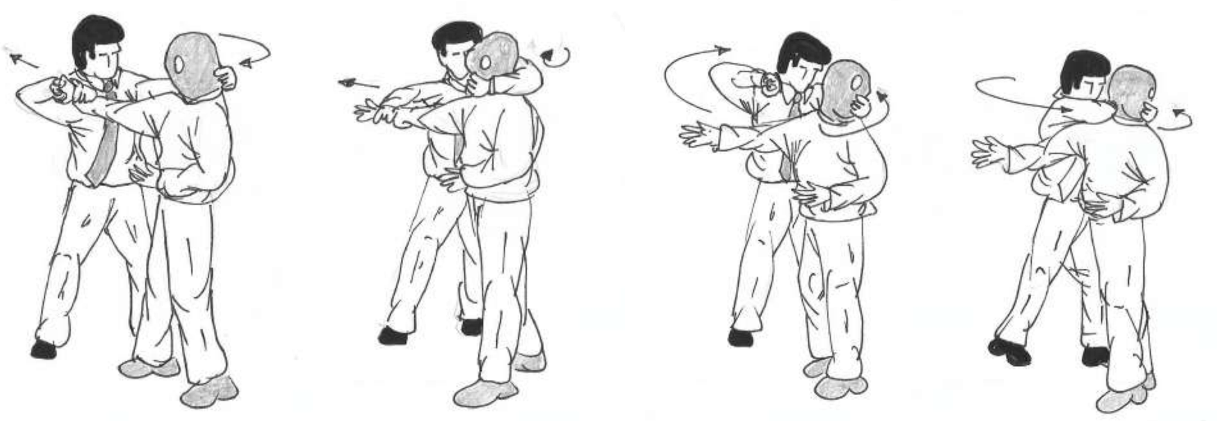


6.4.9 The Neck Destruction

This is a very dangerous Strike to be used only in the most severe of cases. This is an attack to the vital Neck Joints that is crippling and potentially lethal. **Training must be very cautious and its use should be only in desperate last resort.**
The example illustrated below shows the development of the technique against a Jab from opposite stances. This is didactic only, and such a technique is not relevant to such an innocuous attack. You evade forward and out while grabbing the attacking wrist. Pull his hand forward while striking the back and side of his neck with your forearm. This is a *Strike* and **not** a grab. As the violent Strike pushes his head forward, grab his chin with your encircling hand. Twist his chin back with force while releasing his hand. Hold his head in the twist by keeping pulling on the chin and use the other elbow for a hip-powered Circular Elbow Strike the exposed back of his twisted neck. Drill extremely carefully and use with extreme caution and ethics.

➡



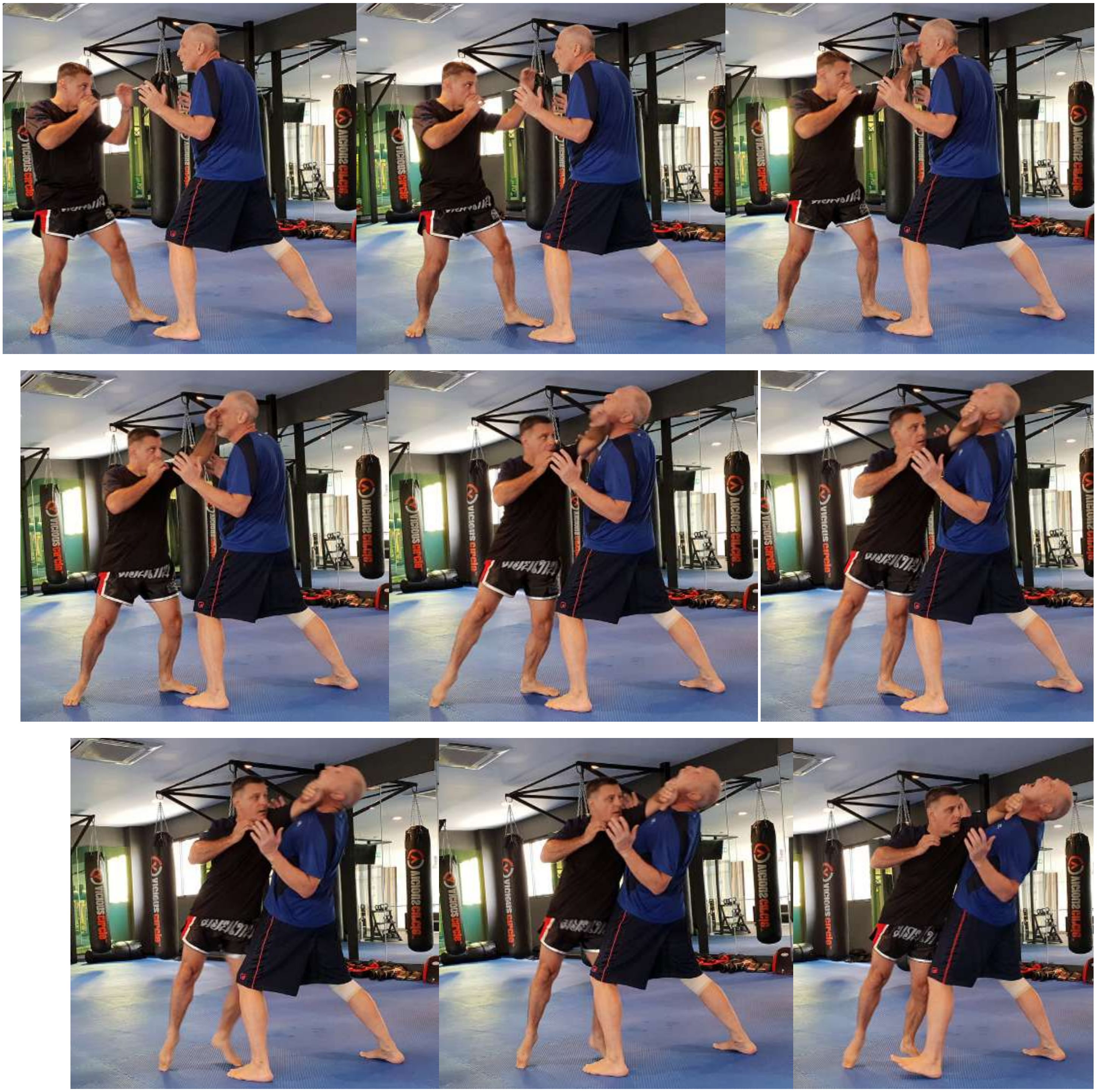


The lethal Neck destruction

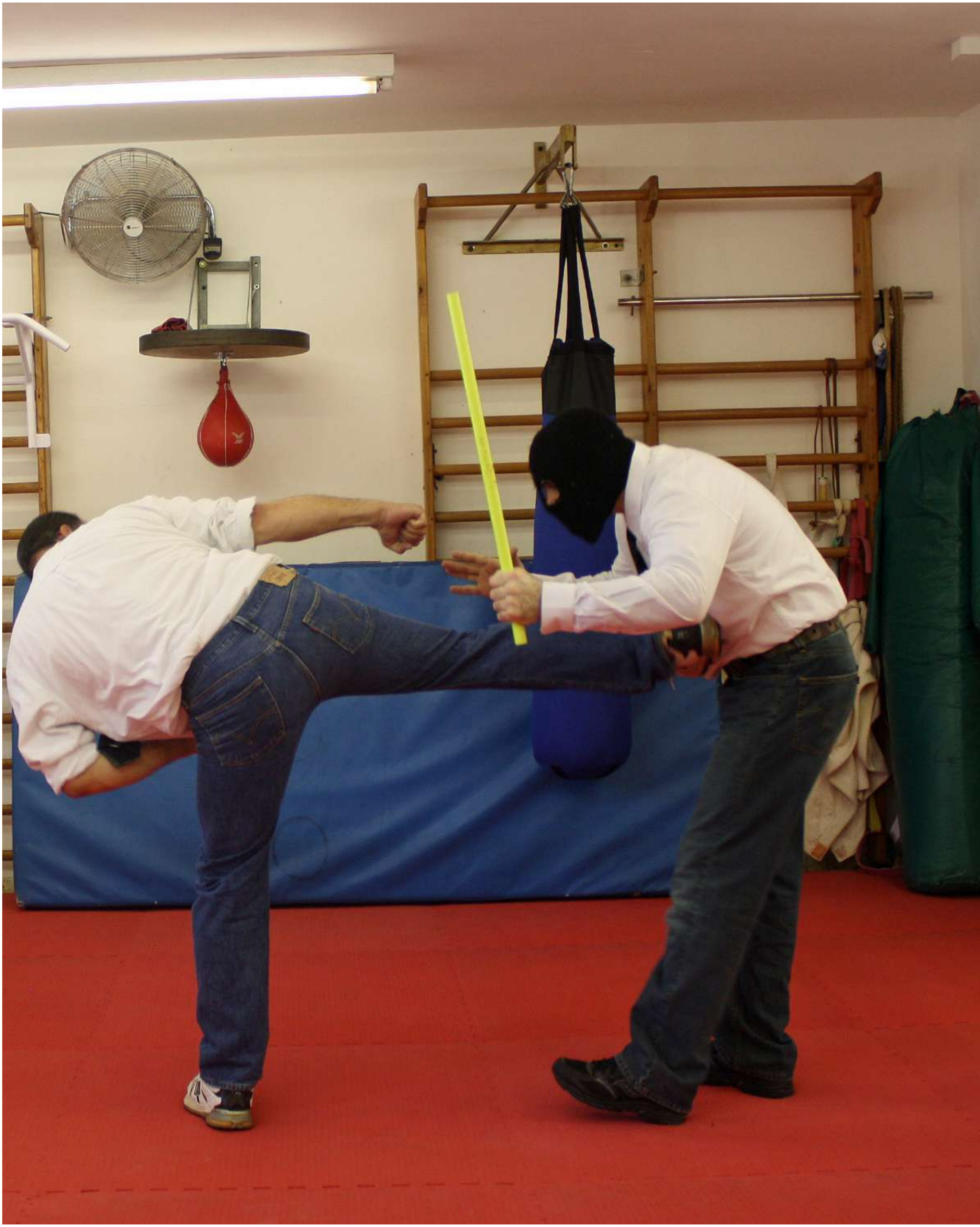
6.4.10 The Eyes and Throat Finish

This is, again, a very dangerous technique to be drilled and used very carefully. It is a fantastic move, especially if your aggressor is taller than you (*which is often the case, as predators tend to prefer what looks like easier prey*). The principle is simple: you poke at the attacker's eyes, claw-like, and then attack his throat that has been 'opened' by both your push and *his instinctive pull back from the eye strike*. In fact, you poke claw-like in order to also naturally push his chin back and up with your palm. You then keep the same strong forward momentum to strike his offered throat with your forearm. When you start drilling this dangerous techniques it is a one-two move in which you even pull back the arm slightly before the forearm strike. With proficiency it becomes **one smooth move** which strength comes from the powerful forward and up surge. This is a great finishing move as a successful strike to both the eyes and throat should be enough for even the most obstinate assailant. See Photos at the top of next page.

➔



The Eye and throat Finish in one smooth move



PART Seven

Defenses against Stick Attacks

הגנה מפני התקפות מקל

7.1 The Stick

A stick assault is a dangerous and potentially lethal attack. And it could be a truncheon, a night stick, a telescopic stick, an umbrella, a fire poke, a baseball bat, a golf club, an unbroken bottle, a pastry rolling pin, a tightly rolled magazine, and many more everyday objects ... Remember that one powerful blow to the skull is capable of causing death or permanent damage. Although, they are potentially less dangerous than Knife Attacks, the threat of an attack with a stick must be taken very seriously and dealt with as early as possible.

Stick-like weapons

Using a stick as a weapon has several drawbacks that the defender should be aware of:

7.1.a. *The stick holder is psychologically relying on his weapon that gives him confidence* (It is true for all weapons). He counts on his stick to scare you and to put you in an inferior defensive state of mind. If you attack him preemptively, you will deeply rattle him. Not only will you physically overwhelm him, but you will destroy his confidence (based on the deterrence of the stick). Do not underestimate the importance of this: a fight is won in the mind first.
If your preemptive attack is successful and you can cause him to lose his stick, the psychological damage will be even greater.

7.1.b. *A stick is effective at medium range only*: it needs momentum to gather energy, and the maximum power is at the end of the stick. This is similar to the situation with Circular Kicks. Therefore, when defending against a stick, **you should get as close as possible to your opponent**, where the stick is useless. Again: be preemptive and go forward!

7.1.c. *A stick strike is usually overhead, swinging or backhand; and these moves require chambering.* Only with some chambering will the strike gather enough energy to be effective. By chambering, the stick holder will 'open' himself. That is when to stop-strike him: dive in before the weapons swings back forward towards you. Again: forward and early. *Krav Maga* is all about an offensive forward-leaning attitude.

Reading these drawbacks, one can only draw the following **principles** on how to deal with a stick attack:

- Attack a stick-holder *preemptively* as soon as possible. Do not wait for an attack to crystallize.
- If you are attacked, *dive in as soon as the assailant chambers*: attack the opening created by the move.
- If you are too late, *go forward anyway*, eventually diagonally.

Forward, offensive, early, and keep going. That's *Krav Maga*…

Should you be able to disarm the assailant and get hold of the stick yourself, you should be aware of the drawbacks mentioned before for the stick holder. And therefore:

- Be dynamic and *strike immediately as you get control of the stick*. Keep going until you win the fight with no hiatus.
- *Do not rely on the stick* for your defense; use kicks and other strikes in *Retzev*.
- If you have a stick and are not in a dynamic situation, it is better to *poke* with it than to swing. *Poke at sensitive targets* like the eyes, the throat, the ears, the mouth, the floating ribs, and more; this way, no need to chamber.

7.2. Preemption

If you are suddenly confronted by an individual holding a stick, **go immediately on the offensive**. Forget the hindrance of your social upbringing: this is what gives predators an edge. Do not overthink the situation: holding a threatening weapon while confronting you does not leave any doubts about his intentions. This is a dangerous physical threat, and waiting gives the advantage to the assailant. Someone threatening you, directly or indirectly, with a weapon, has most probably the intention to use it.

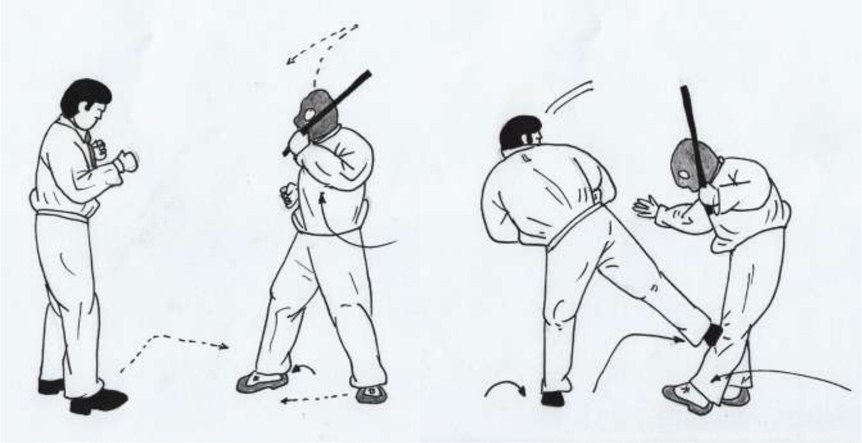
Preemption is always to be preferred in *Krav Maga*. Explode into a forward diving attack *while your opponent is still gearing himself up to attack* and is still gloating in his supposedly advantageous situation. You will rattle him psychologically and physically, and you will probably be able to start a *Retzev* that will conclude the fight before the attack could even materialize.

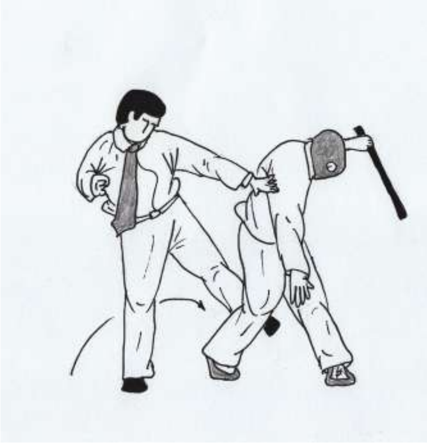
Your preemptive attack can be one of the following:

- **Simply an offensive move that completely ignores the stick**. Our previous book (*Krav Maga Kicks*) presents many examples, and so does this one in the various sections of Chapter Five (mostly 'Range Covering'). We will not repeat these examples here. So, drill the unarmed techniques presented with a partner simply holding a stick menacingly. And also drill the additional techniques presented below.
- **An attack that neutralizes the stick hand** while striking sensitive targets. These are basically the 'Guard Neutralization Techniques' of same Chapter Five. Use them as they are: go for the hand as if it is a guarding limb and ignore the fact that it holds a stick.
- **A dive to grab the stick** while striking sensitive targets with the other hand. You are not trying to disarm him, but just to neutralize the stick for the few seconds necessary to start your *Retzev*. Examples will be shown.
- **A Stop-strike as the opponent starts to chamber** by lifting or wielding his stick. You can then kick or strike the parts of his body uncovered by the chambering move.

7.2.1 Ignore the Stick

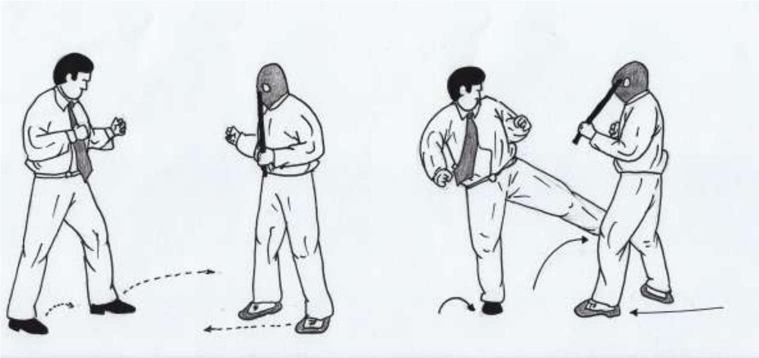
The first set of Illustrations how to 'stop the step' of an assailant approaching. **Ignore the stick and stop-side-kick his advancing knee**. Remember to strike forcefully *through* the knee with the power of the hips. We have illustrated that the ensuing *Retzev* starts with a 'Low Kick' through the other knee. And do not stop there.



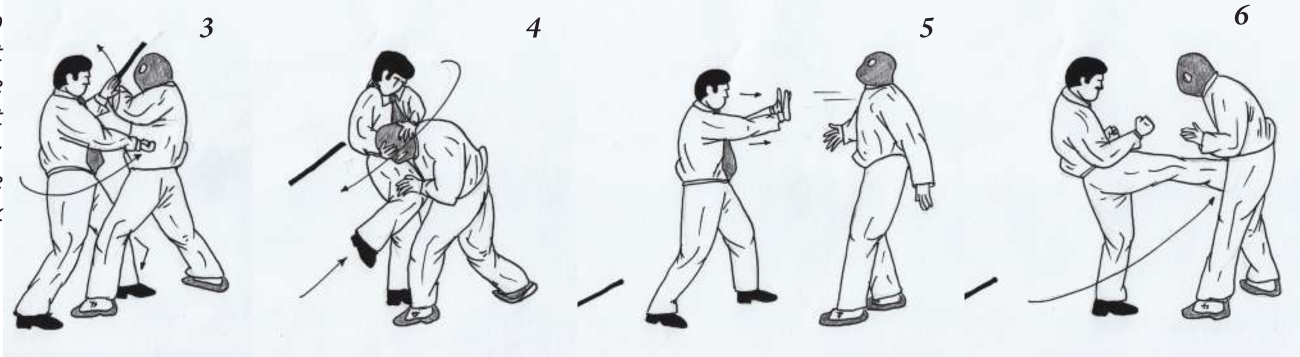


Ignore the stick and destroy the knees

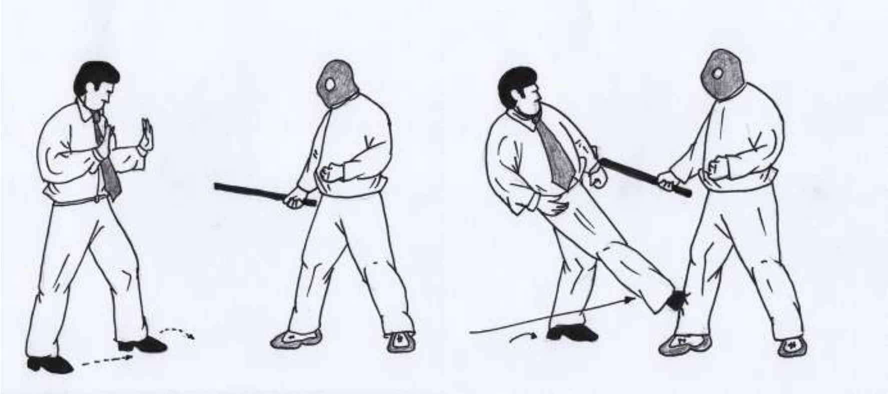
You can also 'stop the step' of the approaching opponent **with a fast and low Roundhouse** to the front knee or better, **to the groin**. Land close and control the stick hand while punching the floating ribs forcefully. Grab his head for a Knee Strike and push him away for a full-powered Groin Front Kick. Keep going. See Figures below.



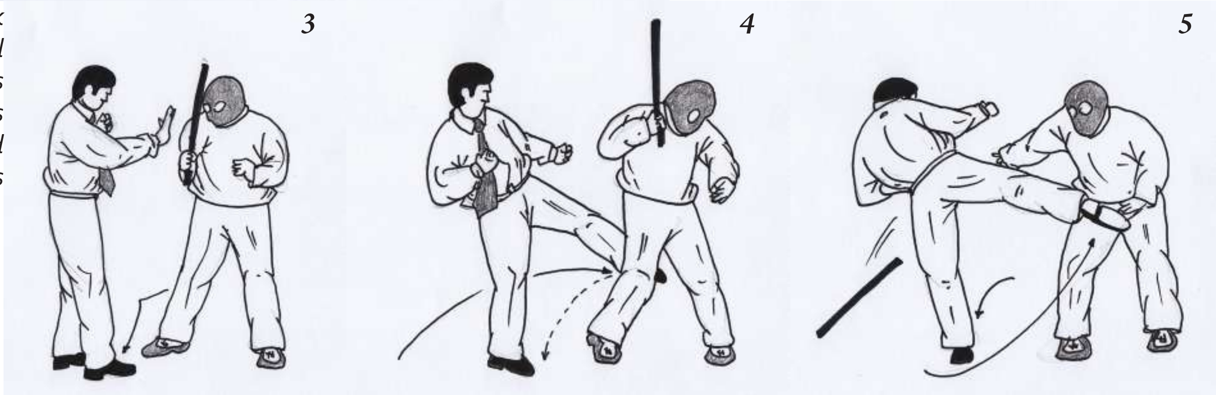
Stop the step with a fast Roundhouse and start a Retzev; ignore the stick



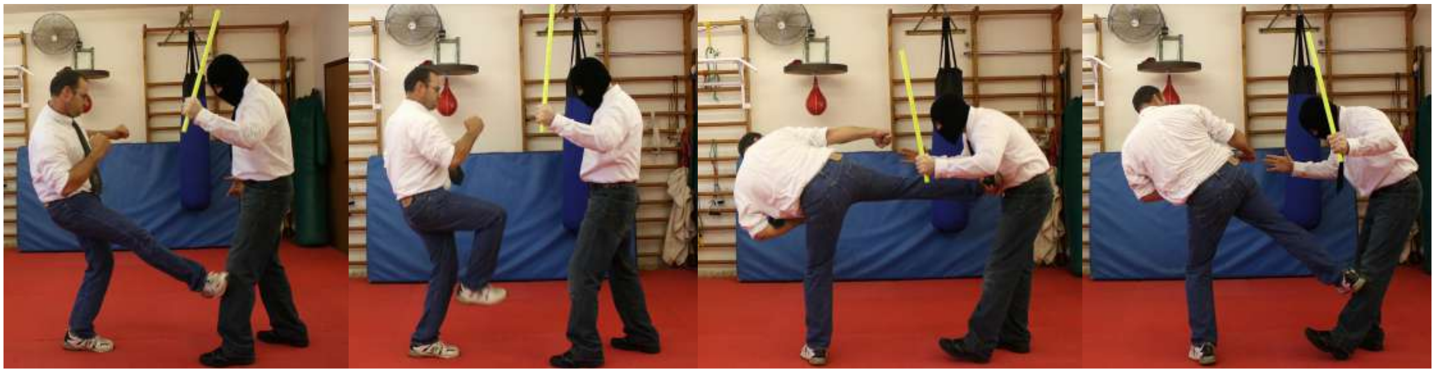
In the next example, **you simply kick his shin** as he is still in threatening mode. Remember to be *stealthy* (upper body does not move) and to kick harshly *through* the shin surface. While you lower the foot, attack his face with a Palm Strike, over his armed hand (in order to hinder any reaction with the stick). Start your *Retzev* with a 'Low Kick' *through* the knee joint, and a Roundhouse of the other leg to his groin. And keep striking...



Preempt any stick strike with a painful Shin Kick that is the start of a series of uninterrupted attacks

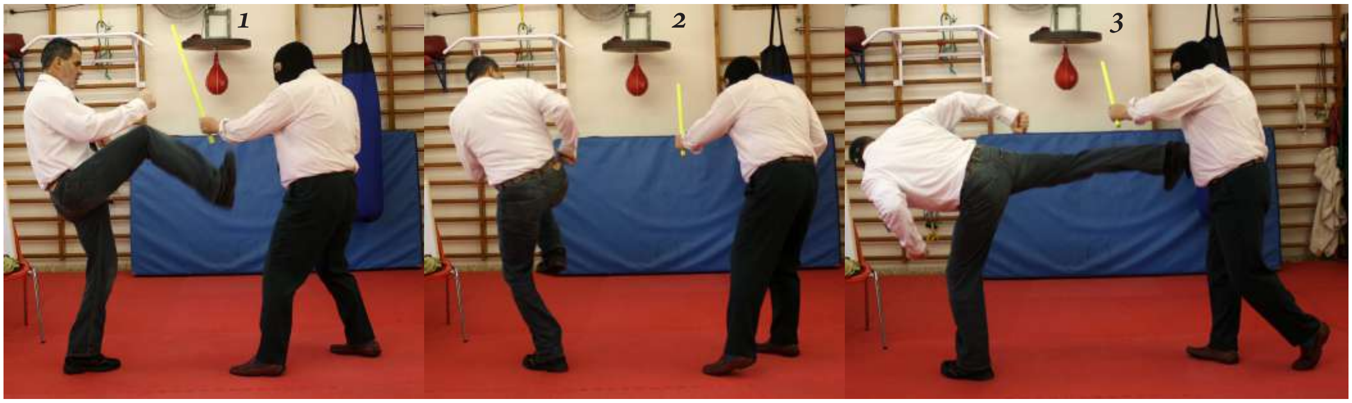


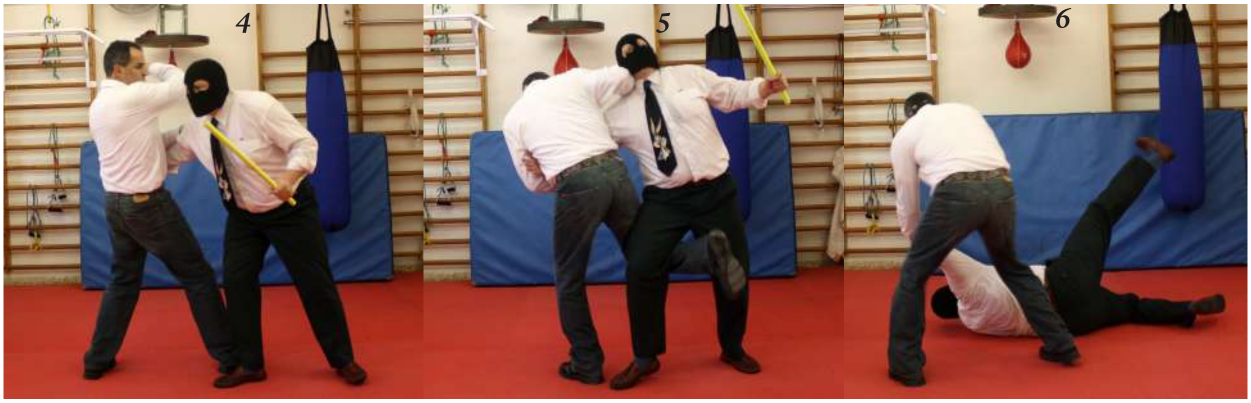
Another way to follow up on the previous **Shin Kick preemptive attack** is presented in the Photos below. The retracting Low Front Shin Kick turns *naturally* into a Side kick Chamber. Kick powerfully to the groin or the floating ribs area. You can then start your *Retzev*, for example with a crushing Low Side Kick to the front knee.



Attack with a Shin Kick that turns into a powerful Side kick, and follow up

We conclude this section with a more *sophisticated* approach, recommended for advanced trainees only: **crescent-kick the arm holding the stick**. If you are proficient and flexible, it is a very aggressive maneuver that will rattle the opponent's confidence. Hopefully you will also hurt his elbow joint and destabilize him. Follow up in stride with a naturally-flowing Side Kick to the floating ribs. You can then side-elbow his head as you land the kicking foot forward, and take him down with a classic Outer Reaping Throw.





Initiate a preemptive attack targeting the elbow of the stick-wielding arm

7.2.2 Neutralize the Stick Hand

Please refer to the previous section about 'Guard Neutralization Techniques'. Drill the same techniques with the partner holding a stick. You also *ignore the stick* and go for the temporary neutralization of the hand (that happens to hold the stick).

7.2.3 Neutralize the Stick

The same techniques used *to neutralize the hand and the guard* can be used here.

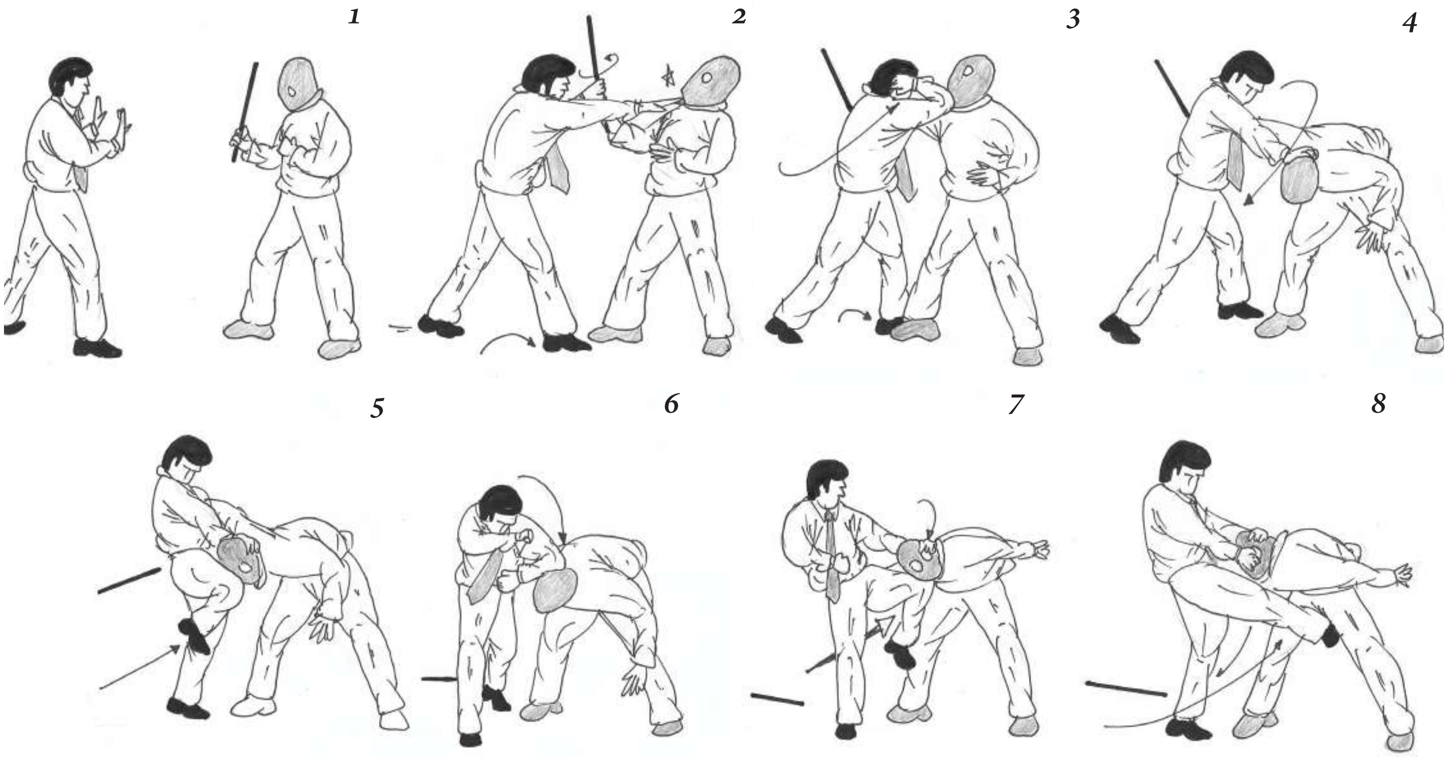
Instead of moving and controlling the hand, you move or grab the stick, just for the time necessary to attack sensitive points. It is easier because the stick is longer and usually more in range.

Do not grab the stick in the spirit of trying to disarm him or gain control of it. You grab or move the stick just to neutralize it temporarily, while your other hand attacks his eyes or his throat. Grabbing the stick has also the advantage of diverting the assailant's attention from the incoming strikes.

Drill all the previously presented 'Range closing' and 'Guard Neutralization' Techniques, but with the stick in mind instead of the opponent's hands. It is pretty easy: just dive in aggressively.

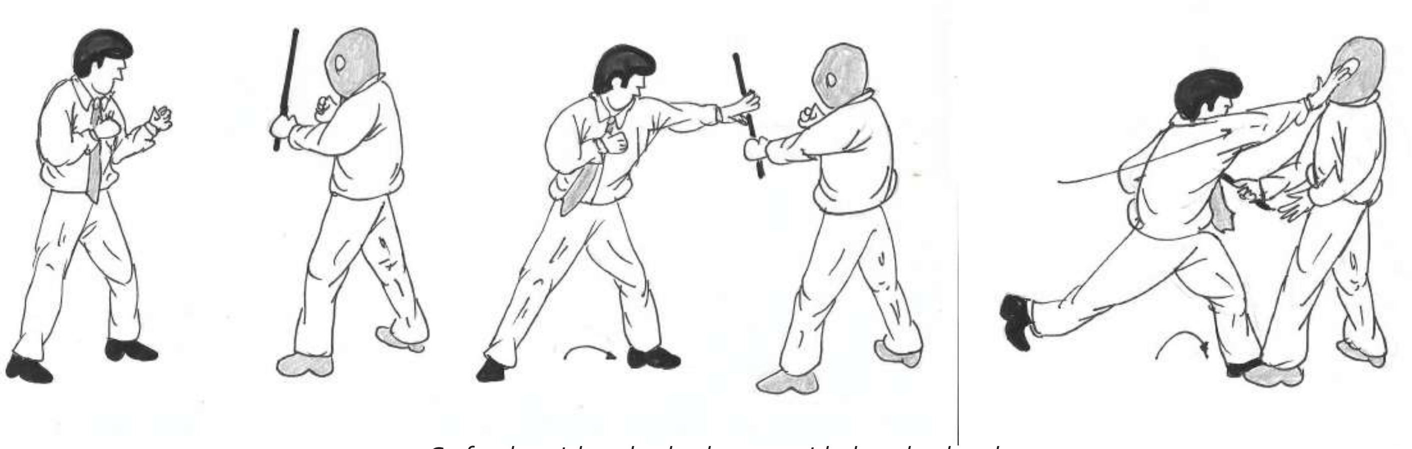
Here come a few new and specific examples.

The first set of Drawings, at the top of next page, illustrates how to **dive and grab the brandished stick, while attacking the opponent's throat**. Keep your forward momentum as the Finger Jab becomes an Elbow Strike. All the while, you are keeping hold of the stick, but do not concentrate on it and do not try to take it off him; let him worry about that. Straighten the elbowing arm behind his neck to pull his head down into a first Knee Strike. Follow up with a Downward hips-driven Elbow Strike to the back of his neck. The *Retzev* can go on with another Knee Strike to the face, a grab that applies pressure to the eyes and a Groin Kick.



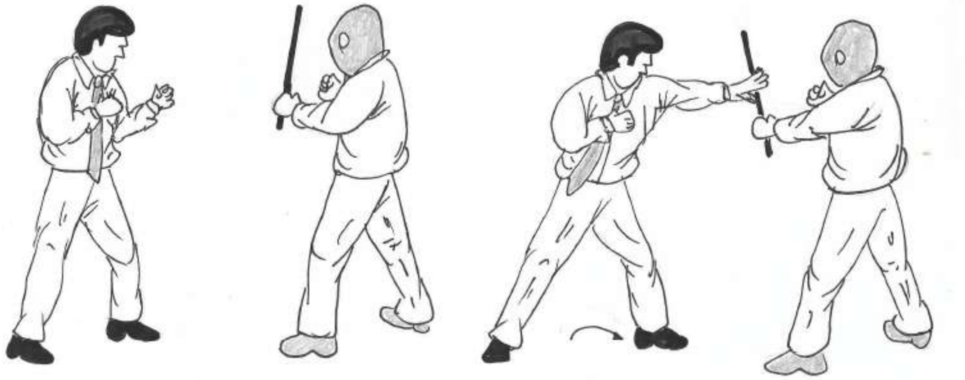
Dive in for the stick while, in fact, attacking the throat; start an implacable Retzev

You can also simply **dive for the stick to attack the eyes**. Then start your own following-up series.

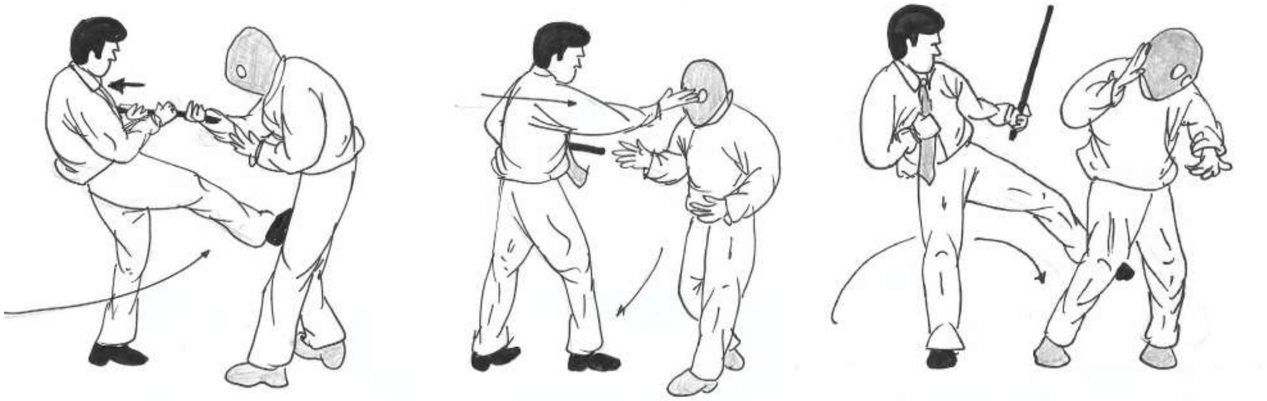


Go for the stick and poke the eyes with the other hand

Or you could **kick his groin after grabbing the stick**. Attack his eyes when your kicking foot lands. He will certainly release the stick at this stage, but you are already attacking his knee joint with a circular 'Low Kick'. Kick *through* and keep attacking until he is fully vanquished. See Illustrations at the top of next page.



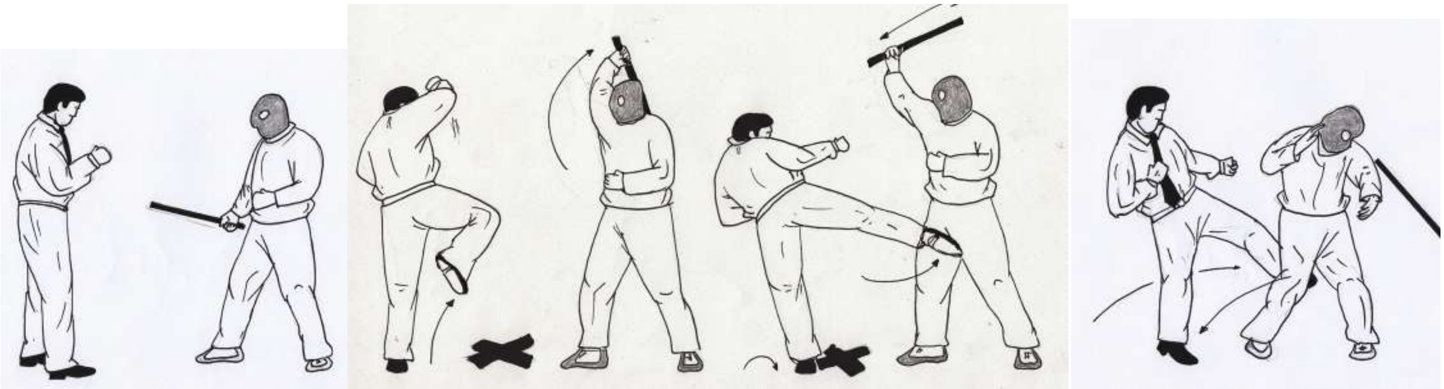
Dive for the stick and kick his groin; follow up by poking his eyes and more



7.2.4 Stop-strike the Chambering of the Stick Attack

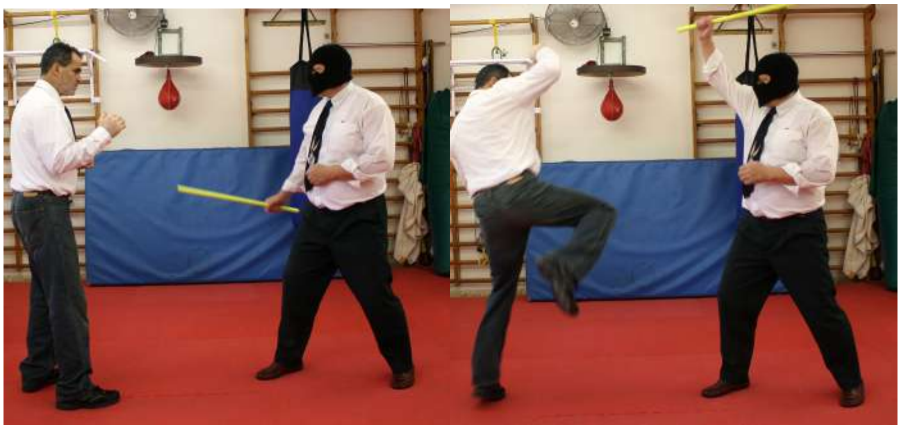
The idea is pretty simple, but it requires timing and speed that only strenuous drilling can achieve. The obvious chambering is usually up for a haywire downward strike and it tends to really 'open' the whole body and leave it unprotected. The target of choice will usually be his groin, which ensures that the chambering stick strike will not mature to completion...

The first series of Drawings, at the top of next page, will make this amply clear.
As the assailant lifts his stick to gather energy for the strike (or simply to threaten and intimidate you), you hop forward with a *front-leg fast Roundhouse Kick to the unprotected groin*. Simple, easy, clean. Start your *Retzev*, for example with a Low Kick through the knee joint.

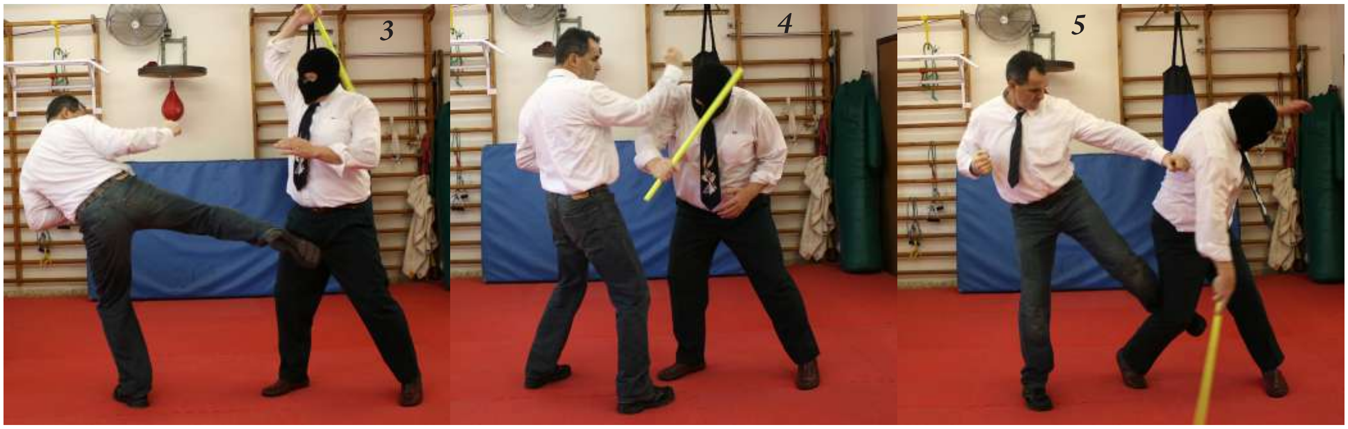


Fast and stealthy Groin Roundhouse as he lifts his armed hand

There are, of course many ways to follow up on the Groin Kick. You could, for example, insert a Forearm Strike to the side of the assailant's neck before the Low Kick to the knee. Do what is natural to you and do not stop until full victory.

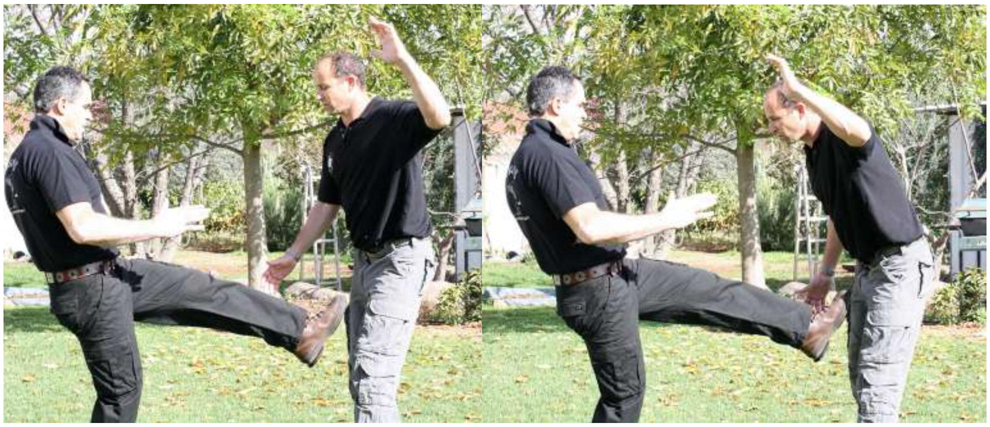


The Groin Stop kick can be followed by your own version of the Retzev

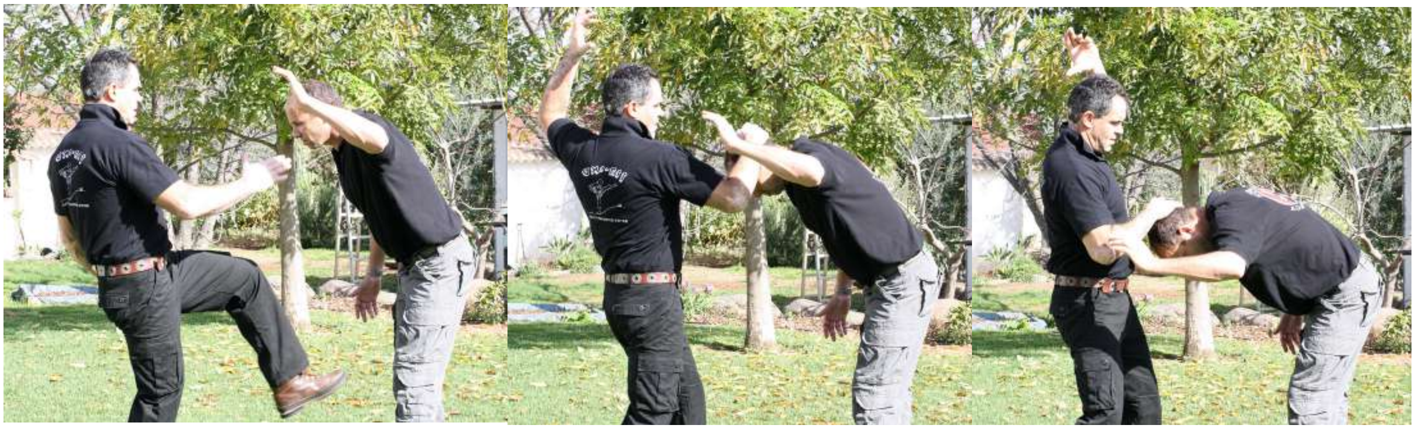


Of course, **a straight Front Kick to the groin** will do as well to stop the developing stick strike. The Photos at the top of next page show how to kick as he chambers up (The stick has to be imagined by the reader, as it is a make-believe drill). You can naturally follow up by attacking the back of his neck, offered by his crouching in pain. Keep pounding him until the fight is clearly won.

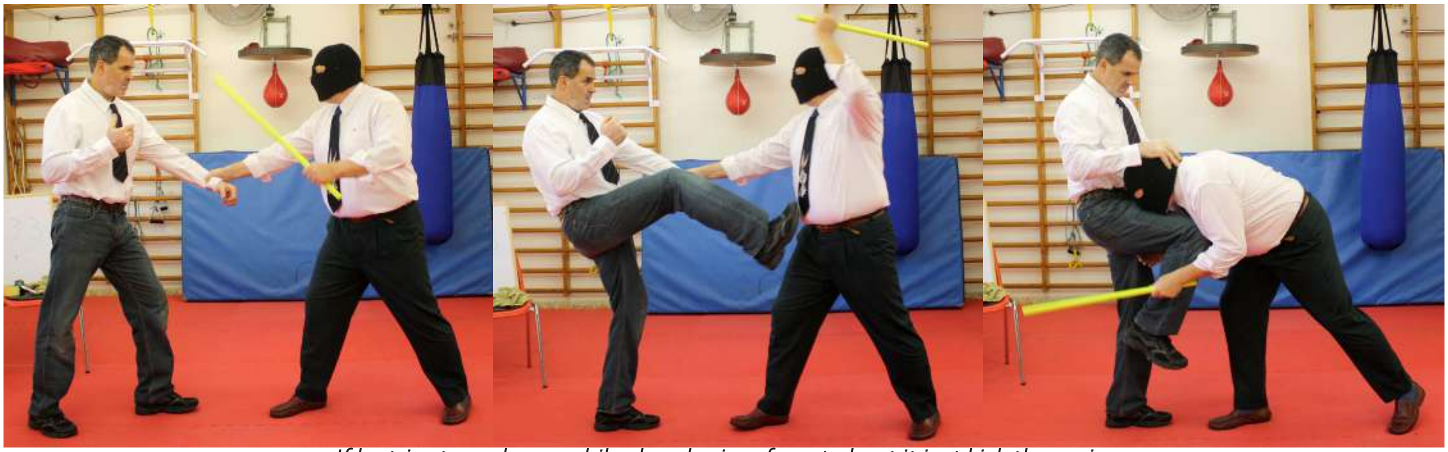
➔



Front Stop Kick to the groin as he lifts his stick hand

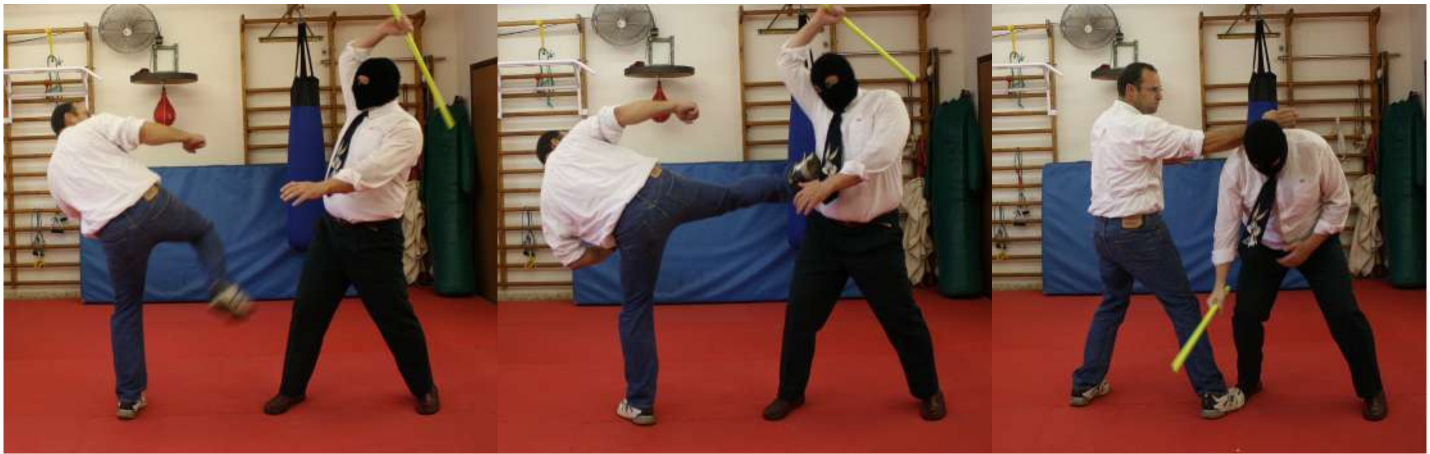


The assailant could also be **grabbing your wrist or lapel as he prepares to strike**. That should not make any difference: kick his groin, brutally. And then follow up, for example by grabbing his head for a Knee Strike to the face.



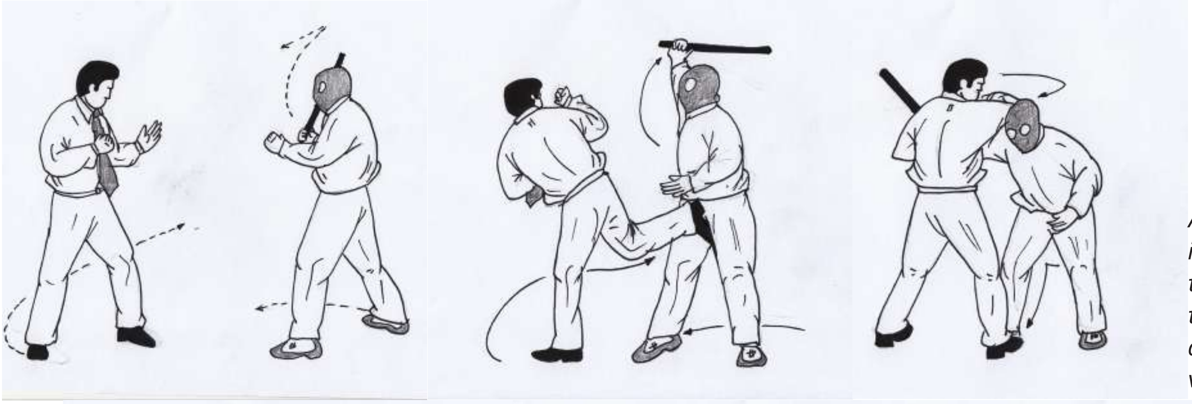
If he tries to grab you while chambering, forget about it just kick the groin

Other Kicks can be used to stop the developing stick strike at the chambering stage. **The Penetrating Side Kick to the floating ribs** is a good example, because the lifting of the arm opens the ribs to make them much more vulnerable. Remember to kick *into* the target, at least a few inches. *Do not push*, but kick fast and chamber back.

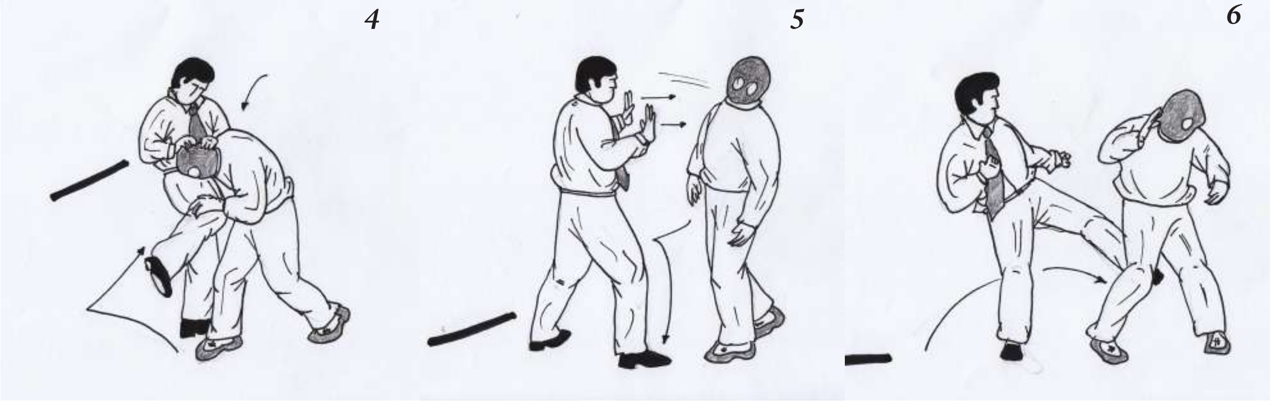


Stop the chambering with a well-timed Side kick into the floating ribs; follow up with a strike to the back of his neck

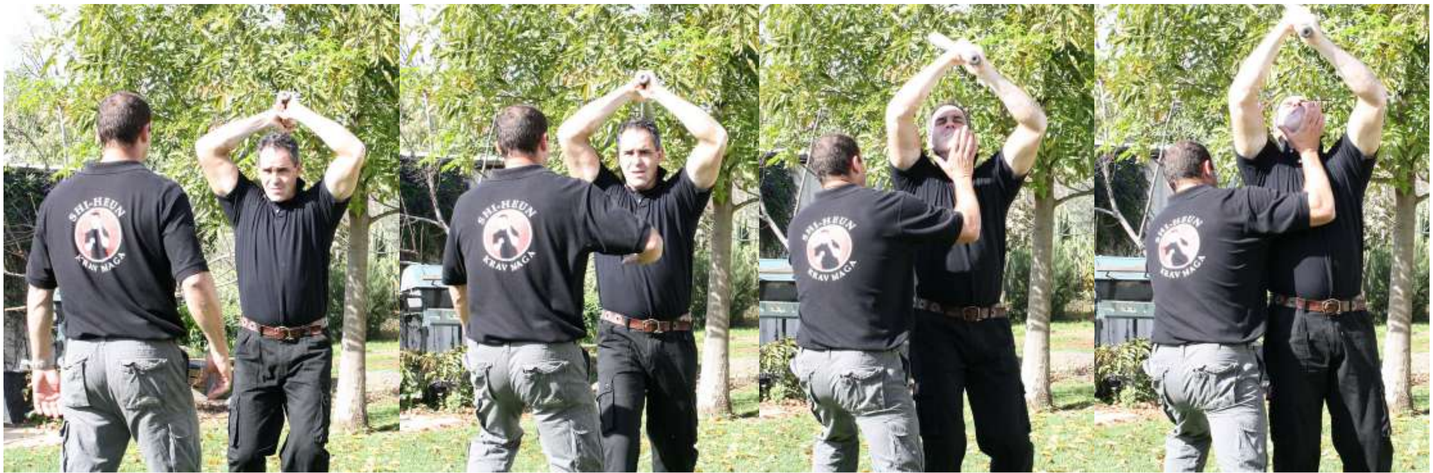
Another possibility is the use of the **Upward Back Kick to the groin** in its Spin-forward or Spin-back version. The advantage of this Kick is in its stealthiness and the fact that your presenting your back will embolden him to lift his stick and chamber his strike. The natural follow-up of a Side Elbow Strike will stun him for the rest of the *Retzev*: a Knee Strike to the face and a Low kick through the knee after a violent push-away. Keep at it!



An Upward Back Kick into the groin will stop the chambering of the stick and set the assailant up for what will follow



If the assailant holds his stick (a baseball bat) **with both hands and lifts it high up for an all-out attack**, dive immediately forward into his move to attack him with an early Palm Strike to the chin. Strike up and through. This is a very dangerous strike that hurts the neck joint and adds its momentum to the forward momentum of the assailant. Follow up until you are sure he is neutralized.



Against the chambering of a downward baseball bat strike, jump forward with a powerful Palm Strike to the chin

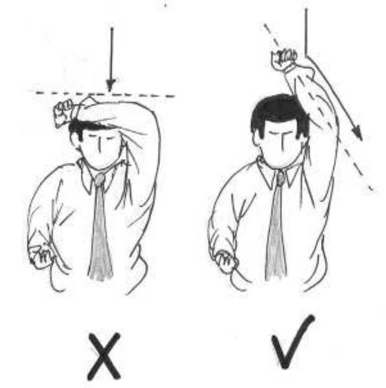
7.3 Defense against a Downward Stick Strike

The Downward Stick Strike is the most common; it can have a straight or a diagonal trajectory. This attack is atavistic: it unconsciously tries to bash your skull like on ancient battlefields. It requires a good chamber in order to gather the energy necessary to hit your head forcefully, and therefore is easy to spot. Such a strike, if successful, is potentially lethal: it can crack your skull. It can also break your orbital bone, your clavicle, your nose, your mandibular joint, and many more. This is a very serious aggression that requires a swift and violent response.

Of course, *preemption* is preferable, closely followed by *attacking the chamber*, as seen before. But if you have been taken unawares, you'll have to deal with the attack in more traditional ways. But remember the Golden Rule: always go forward! The closest you are to him, the less he can hurt you. The maximum power is at the tip of the stick; so, dive in! *Krav Maga* is about aggressive defense. And this has the additional advantage of unsettling the assailant, both psychologically and physically.

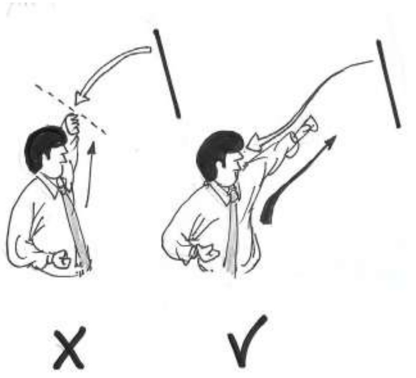
There are basically **2** ways to deal with a Downward Overhead Stick Strike: (1) Block or (2) Evade. And then comes what is generally happening: a Blocking Evasion which a mixture of the 2 responses. Most commonly you will go forward diagonally to evade the general momentum of the opponent, while blocking or at least controlling the stick arm.

Blocking is pretty basic. But it is important to avoid the orthodox 'elbow vs elbow' Upward Block of some traditional Martial arts. In *Krav Maga*, the blocking elbow goes up *diagonally*, and it goes *forward*. Its purpose is to deviate mildly the stick trajectory without stopping it by force. At the moment of contact the elbow is about 45 degrees from perpendicular and keeps extending towards straight. It also goes forward towards the strike. And, as mentioned, the block is generally executed while getting slightly out of the way of the strike (forward of course). The coming figures illustrate clearly the diagonal and forward characteristics of the effective Deviating Block.

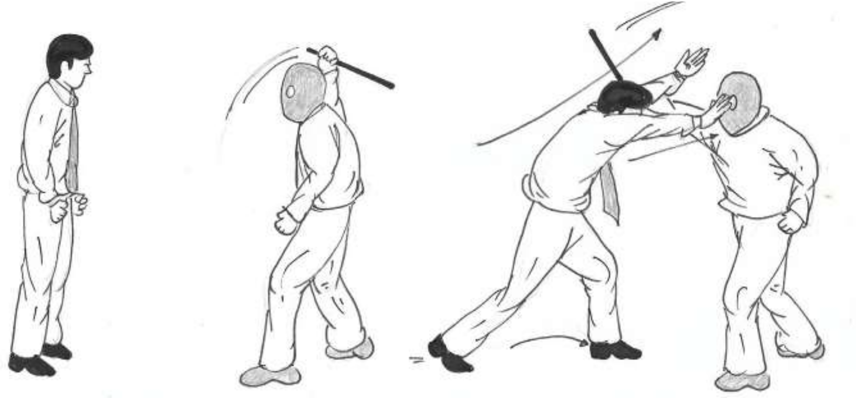


Deviate the strike; do not try to stop it by force perpendicularly

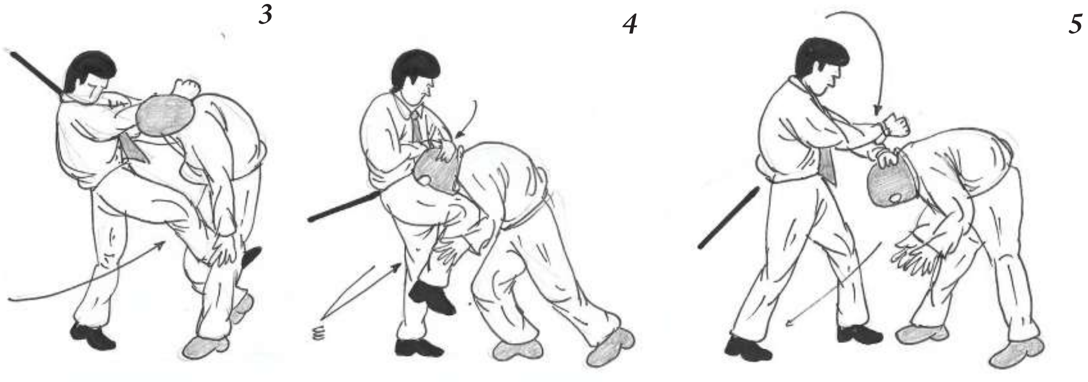
Block forward, not in place, both with the elbow and the body



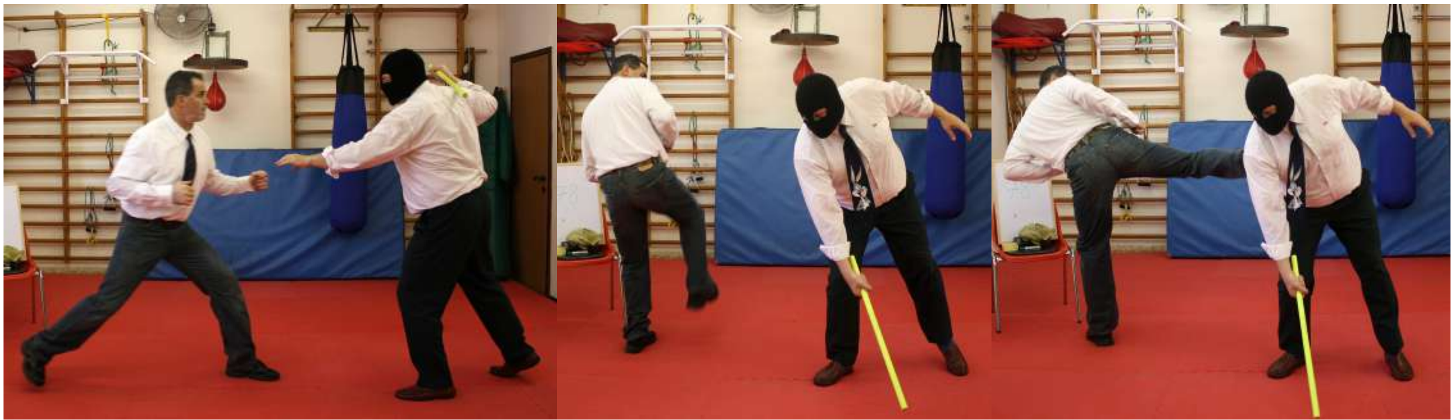
The typical and refreshingly simple way to deal with a **Downward Overhead Stick Strike** is therefore a Diving-forward Block with a quasi-simultaneous Eye Poke. The Block has the advantage of covering your head partially to protect it. As illustrated below, you should follow up with a Groin Kick, a Knee Strike to the face and a Hammer-fist Strike to the back of the neck. Simple, offensive, forward-going… in other words: *Krav Maga*!



Dive forward with a Deviating Block while attacking the eyes

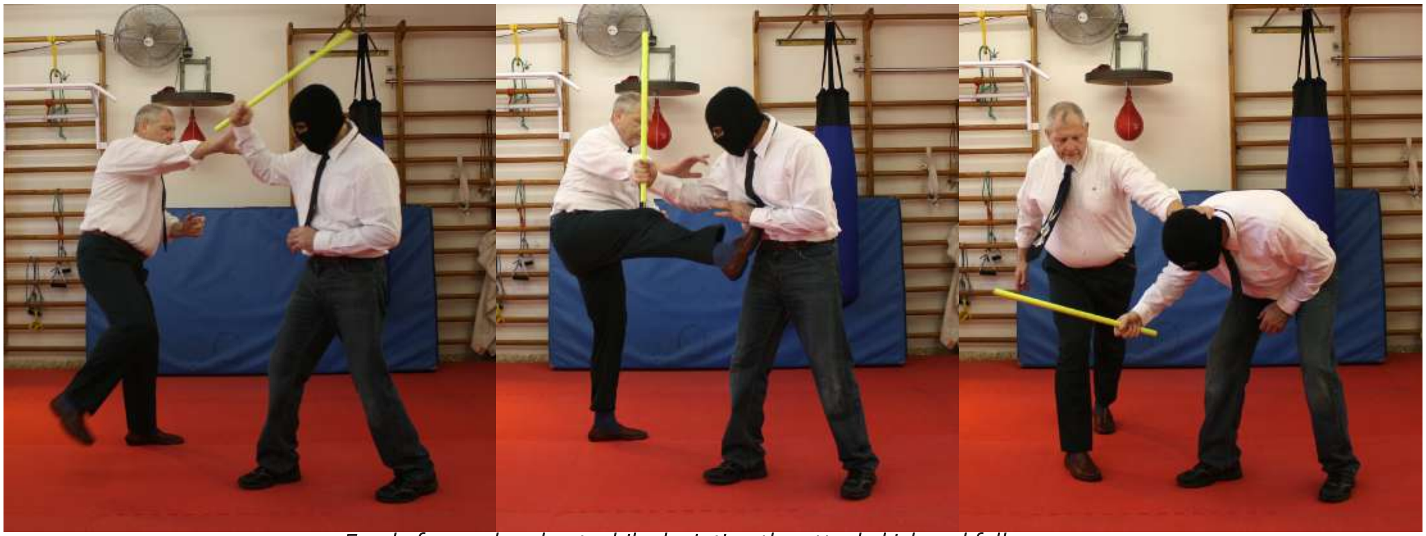


Evading is also, in principle, very simple. But, as you are jumping forward, it is generally best accompanied with at least some control, if not even a 'security' Block. But a possible 'clean' Evasion is presented in the Photos below: you dive forward and out, without blocking or controling, and lean away while chambering a powerful Side Kick. Go for the exposed floating ribs and start a *Retzev*.



Evade forward and out for a Side Stop Kick to the ribs

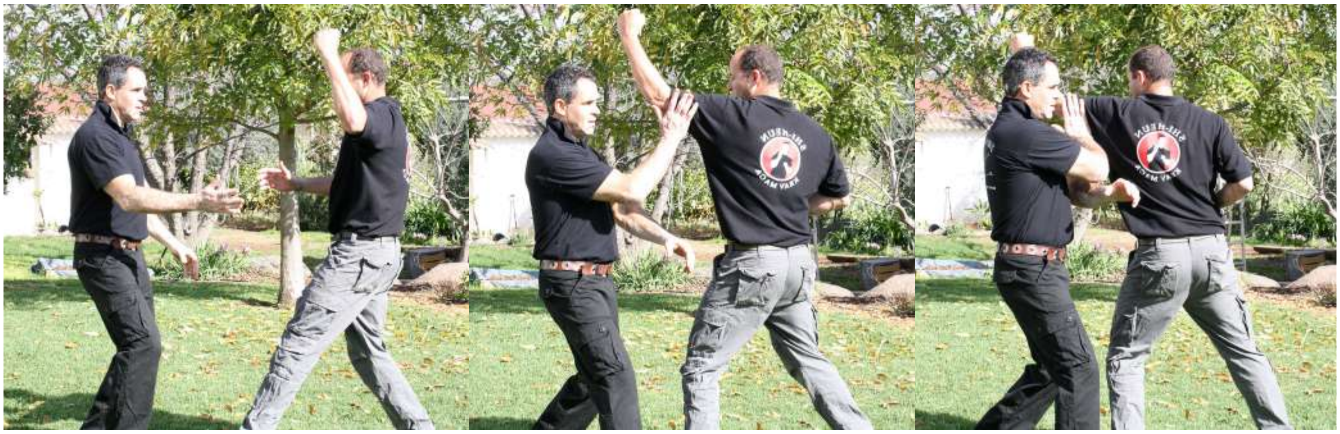
Of course, **some control of the attacking arm is always welcome** and makes for a safer evasion, as illustrated by the coming Photos. Evade out and forward while keeping tabs with the stick arm, and kick fast towards the ribs (or the groin if you can). The Kick is a hybrid between a Front and a Roundhouse Kick, fast and surprising. You can follow up by striking the exposed neck and start a full *Retzev*.

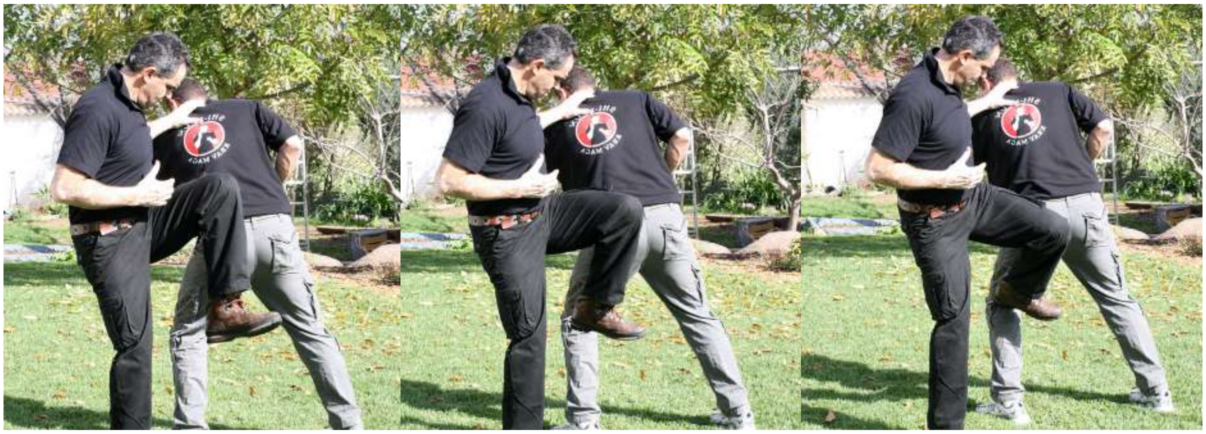


Evade forward and out while deviating the attack; kick and follow up

➡

The advantage of keeping some control of the attacking arm, is that you can evade deeper forward while staying close to him. The next Photos show how to **evade deep forward and out while keeping the stick hand in check**. You then are in position for a devastating Stomp to the back of his knee.

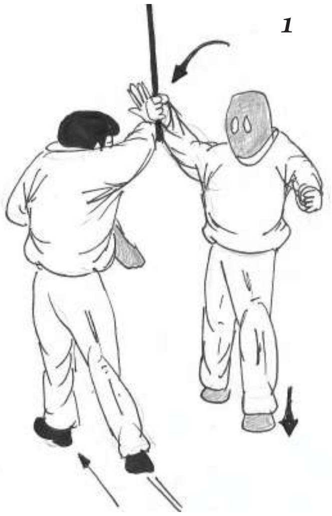




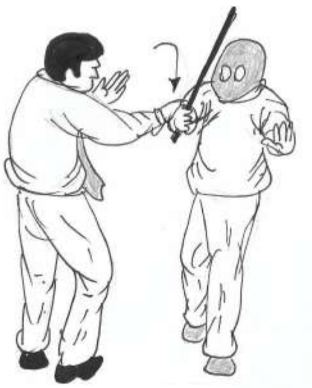
Dive forward and out, very close to the opponent, and keep control of the attacking arm; stomp-crush the back of his knee

At the end of the day, the most common way to deal with an Overhead Strike that is underway, is **the Evading Block**. This can be more of a *Block* or more of an *Evasion* according to the circumstances and your temperament. Scores of examples will be presented, but the simplest and most classic application is the "Clothesline" counter. As illustrated by the Drawings coming at the top of next page, you evade *forward and out* while blocking/deviating the attack. It is important to keep the forward momentum of the assailant alive. Grab his attacking wrist and pull him forward to accentuate his forward move. Let go and strike his throat and/or face with your whole arm going back forward with full bodyweight backing. This is the typical 'clothesline' maneuver that makes maximum use of the forward energy of the attacker.

1

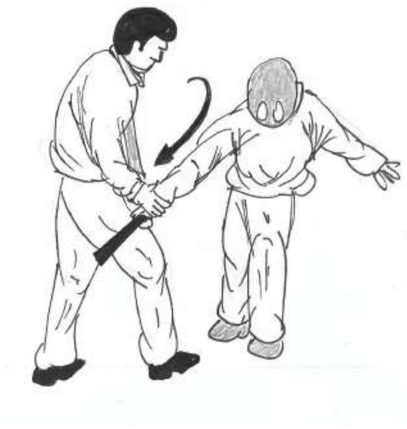


2

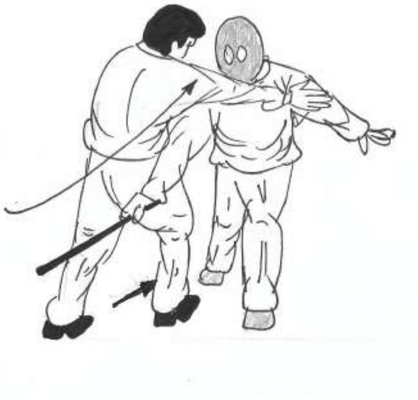


Dive forward and out while blocking and grabbing the attacking wrist; pull in to better 'clothesline' him

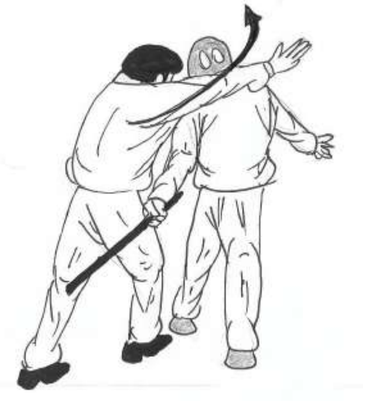
3



4



5

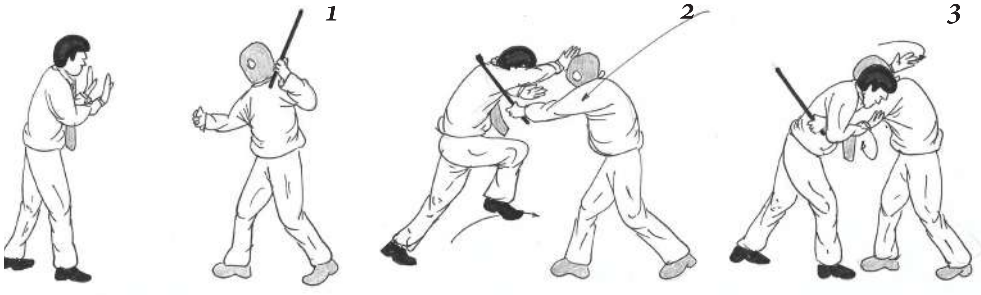


We shall now present a few more examples of **Overhead Stick Defenses**, falling more or less into the different categories described.

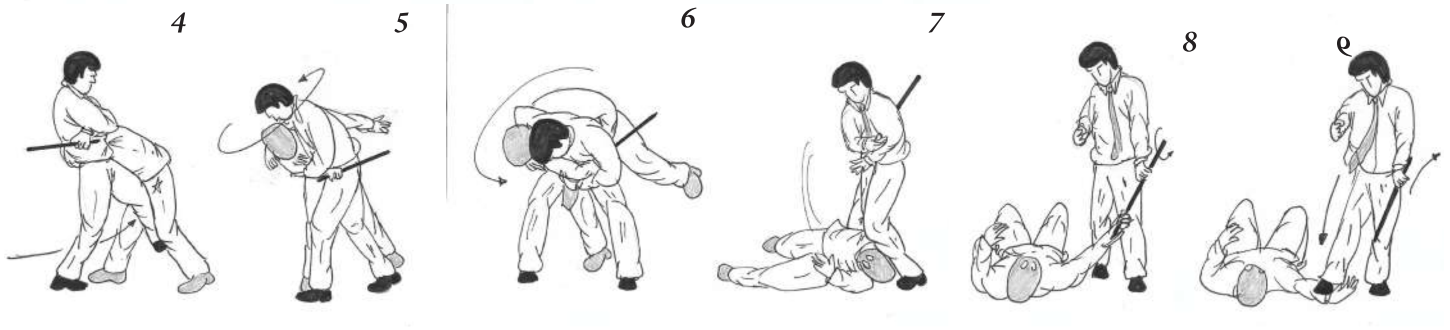
We will start with a few illustrations of the more 'blocking' dive forward, *with less evasion*. This is the classic aggressive *Krav Maga* reaction that is often to be preferred, if you are well trained and confident. In the first set of Drawings at the top of next page, you see how to dive forward while blocking/deviating the Strike. You then get so near the attacker that you can easily encircle his striking arm going down and control him from very close. From this position, several *Retzev* will be presented.

The ***first*** set will show how to kick his groin and pivot to throw him to the ground. Keep his armed elbow encircled when taking him down! You can then grab the stick and stomp his wrist to disarm him; make sure to stomp through the joint as if to crush everything into the ground.

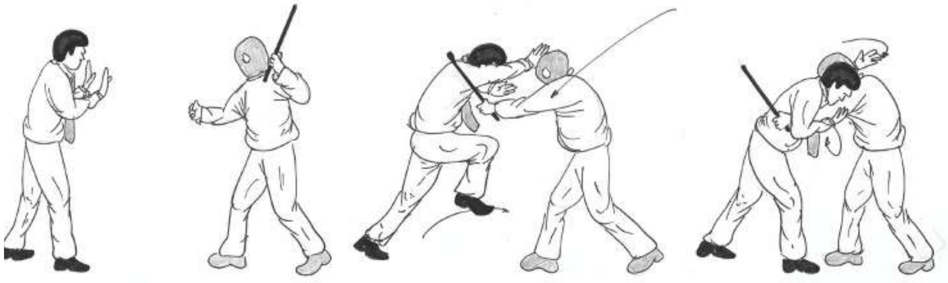
➔

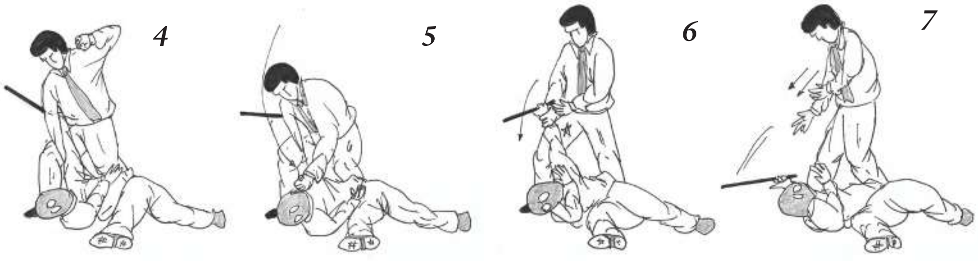


Dive in and deviate the strike to encircle the attacking limb; follow up with a groin kick, a throw and a stomping disarm

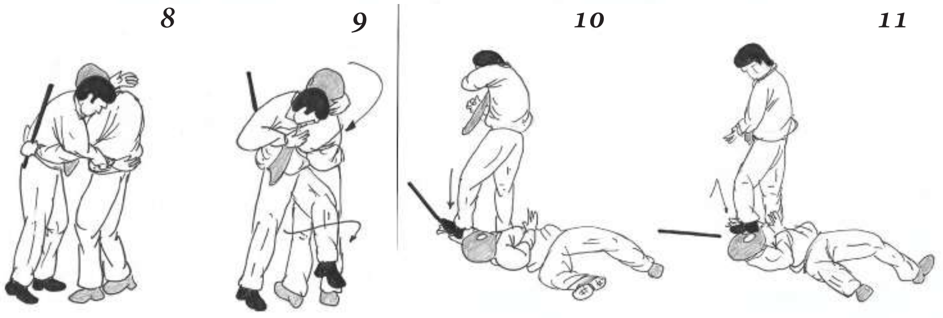


The ***second*** set of Illustrations shows how to execute the same defense and follow up with an Outer Reap Takedown and a Hammer-fist Strike to the side of the head. You can then hyperextend his elbow by crushing it against your thigh, before throwing the arm violently towards the ground. Stomp the wrist as it lands on the ground and follow with a Stomp of his face that crashes his head to the ground.

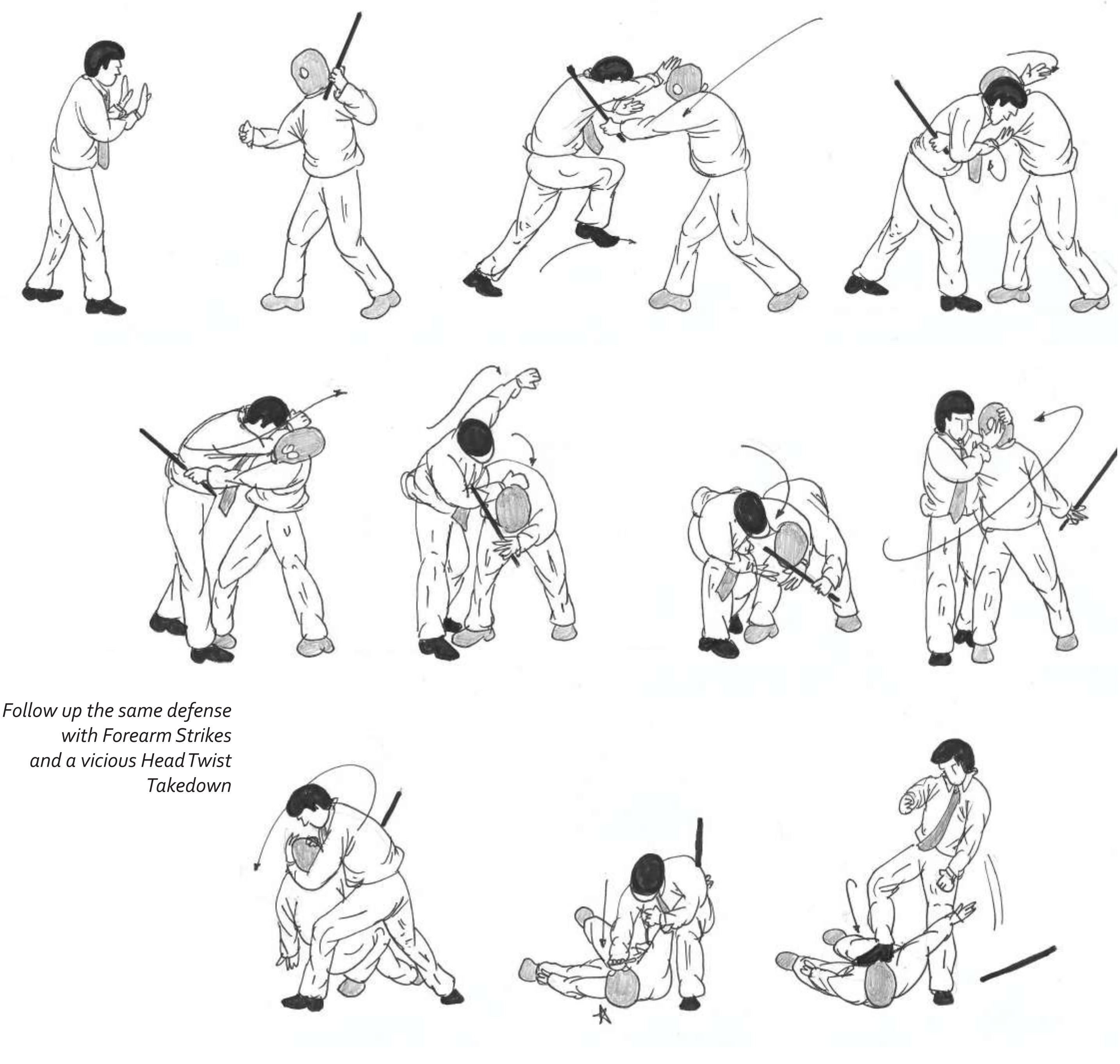




Follow up after same defense with an Outer Reap takedown, head strike, elbow break, hand and head Stomps



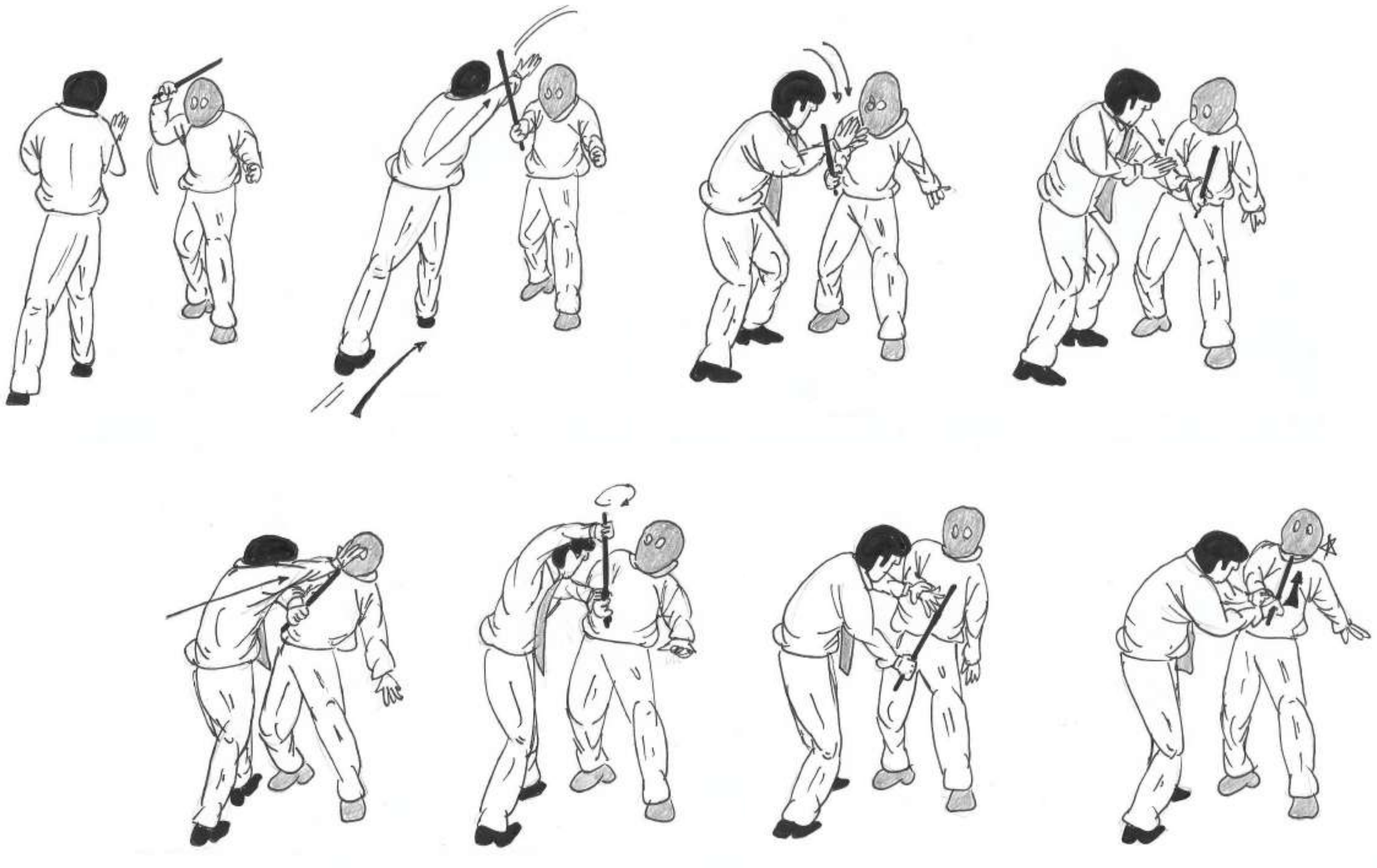
Our last possible *Retzev* after the same diving defense will consist of a **Forearm Strike to the neck** with the arm that has controlled and lowered the stick strike. The same arm then extends to lower his head down for a powerful and body-driven (other) Forearm (Inside Elbow) Strike to the back of his neck. Grab his head, preferably with your fingers in his eyes, for a switch in pivots: lift and twist his head up and then down to his rear, all the way to the ground. A Palm Strike should slam his head in the ground, if warranted, and could be followed by a Stomp Kick to same head.



Follow up the same defense with Forearm Strikes and a vicious Head Twist Takedown

Blocking while evading gives you the option t**o grab the attacking wrist**, which is great for control and for an easier counter towards a sensitive point. But grabbing also allows for most sophisticated techniques ending up in a ***Disarm*** and in you having a stick to conclude the fight.

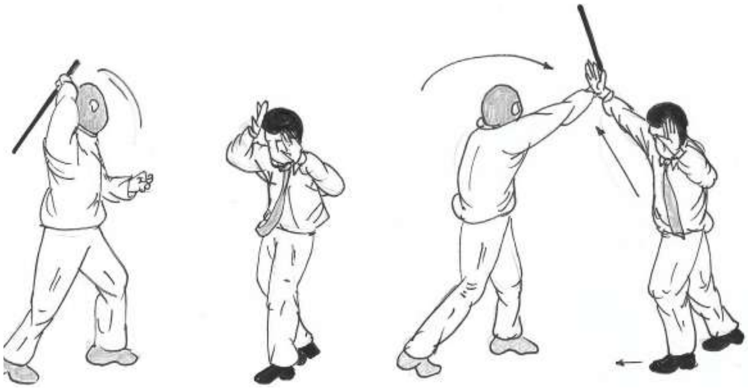
Our first example illustrates the classic blocking move with a clear forward-out evasion. The Evading Block turns easily into a wrist grab with your non-blocking hand (which can grab momentarily for a better control).
Once you have completed the grab, your blocking hand goes immediately to attack the eyes; and then to grab the end of the stick. Your opponent is hurt in the eyes and you make use of his despondency by disarming him: keep his wrist in place and lower the stick violently for half a circle, as per a fulcrum, before pulling the stick free. Use the stick to immediately poke him deeply into the throat or the eye. Start your *Retzev*; I would start with a Groin Kick. You can then (but do not have to) use the stick to hit sensitive targets but *do not become reliant on it*.



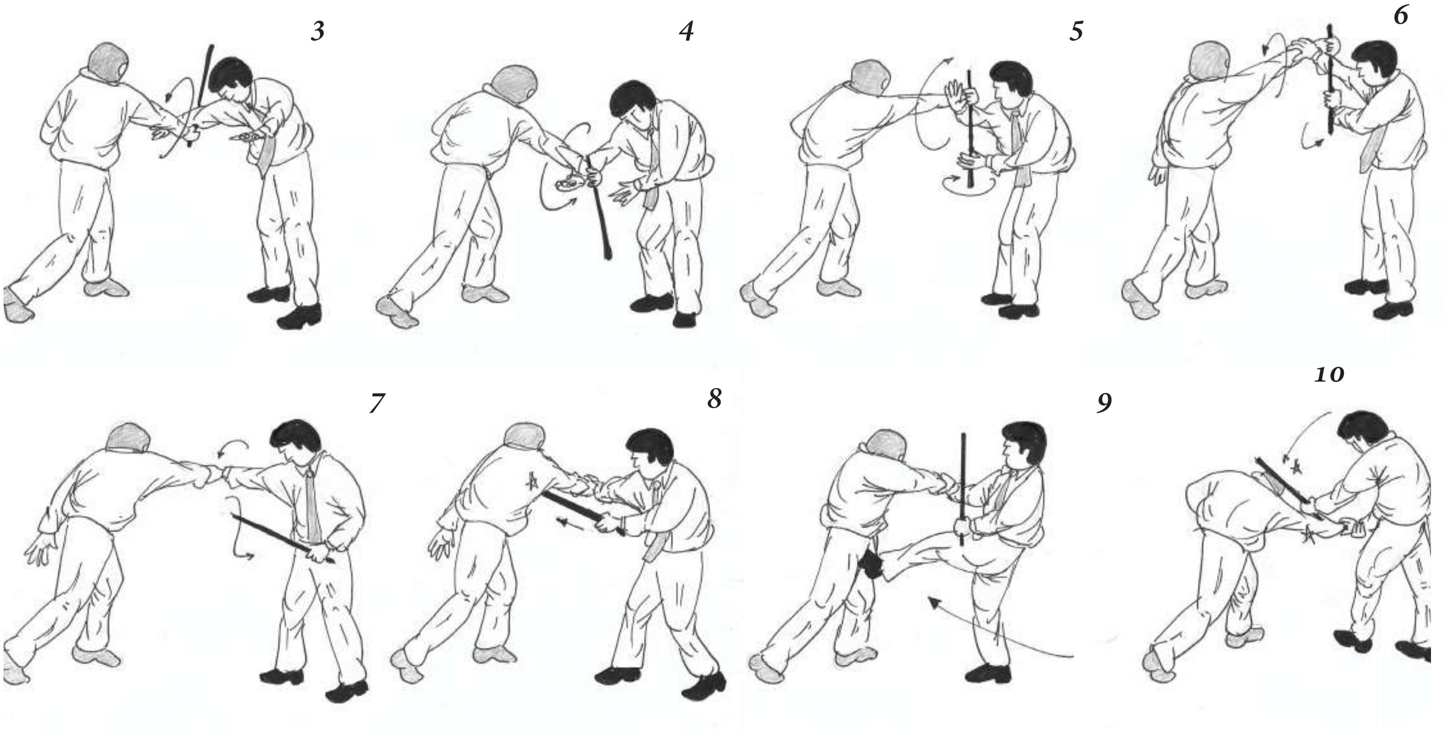
Evade and Block can become a 'Grab and Disarm'

Another Disarm from the same basic 'Evade forward and Block' is presented in the coming Drawings. This is a more sophisticated technique, easy to execute but requiring drilling in order to become automatic in stress situations (*Muscle memory requires training and hard work*). In this example, you encircle the arm to do a full circle before grabbing the wrist in a classical move. You grab the end of the stick, for a long fulcrum, just as you grab the wrist. All this has been very fast, and you only have to lift the end of the stick (violently) while keeping the wrist in place, in order to disarm the assailant.

Pull the stick back to immediately poke deep into his exposed floating ribs; you keep his grabbed arm up and pull him into the strike. Follow seamlessly with a Groin Kick and strike his offered skull with his own stick. Keep at it if necessary.

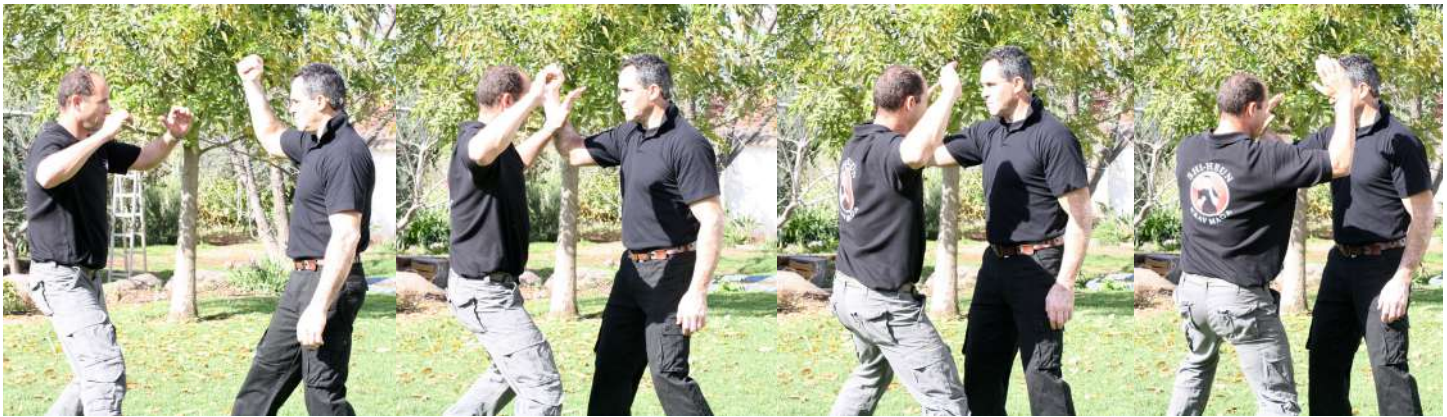


Dive, evade, Block, Grab and Disarm; then kick and use his own stick against him



The last two examples will illustrate that **the Blocking Evasion needs not be exclusively to the outside**.

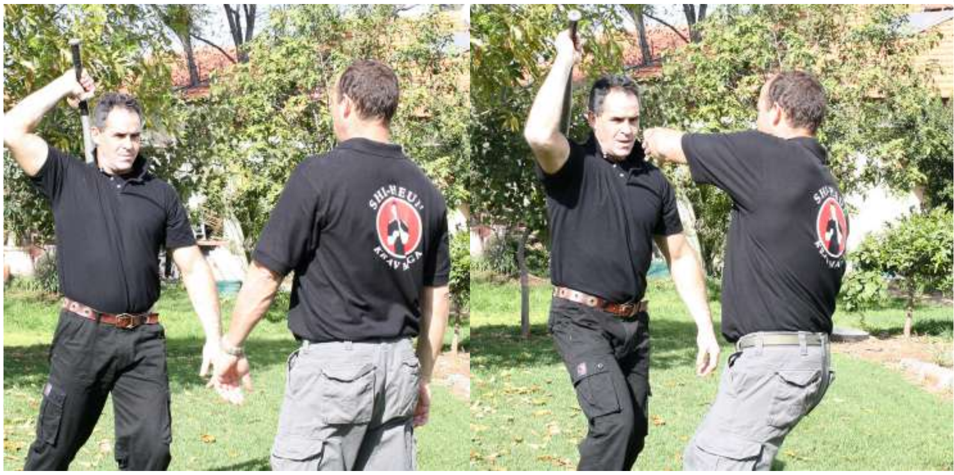
The *first* set of Photos, at the top of next page, shows an Evading Block to the Inside, followed by a simple Knife-hand Strike to the side of the head or neck. Of course, that is only the beginning of a *Retzev*! Your inside position to a rattled opponent is perfect for a Knee to the groin as a starting move.



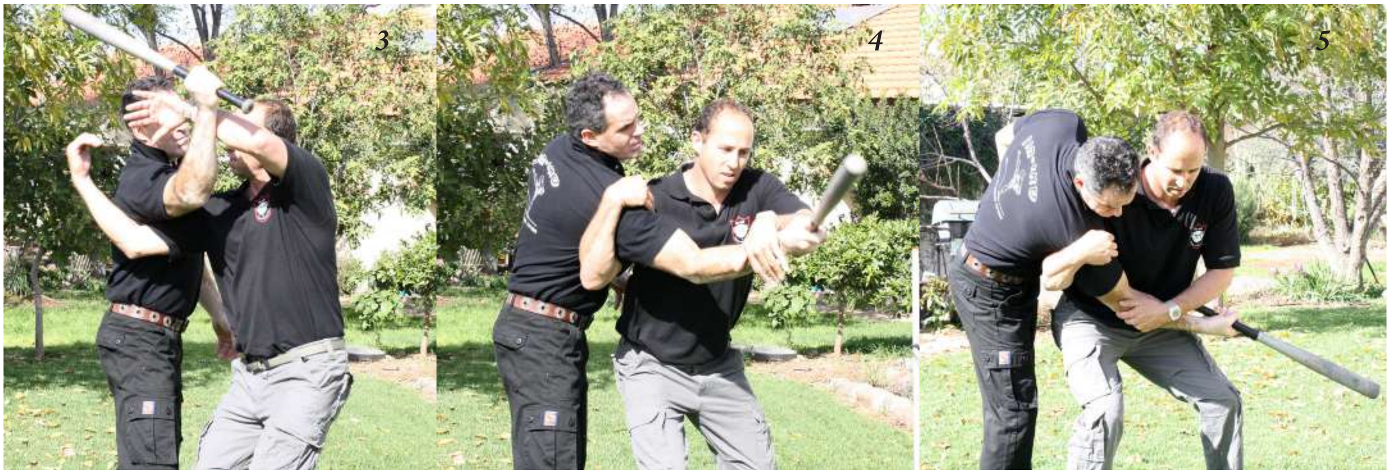
Block while evading on the inside and strike naturally to the head or neck

The last set of Photos will show the same **Inside Evasion that makes use of the opponent's momentum to take him down**. This is a classic *Ju-jitsu* move and principle, that is very much in need to be drilled. If you are skilled, the Takedown can be a real slamming throw, *Judo*-style. If your grappling is not yet to par, it will still be easy to get him to fall to the ground, or at least to fly into the nearest wall (or into his accomplice).

This important move is all about *using his momentum without blocking it*.



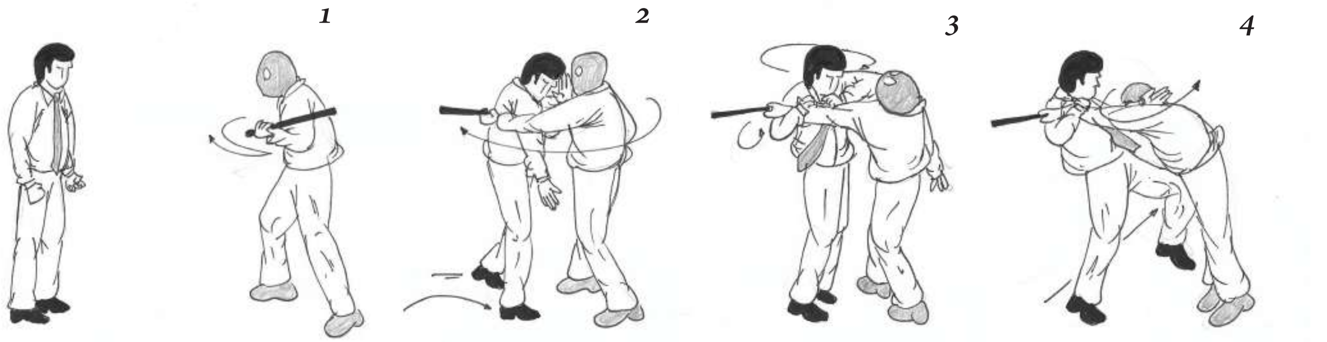
Evade in and grab his arm for a takedown by the energy of his own momentum

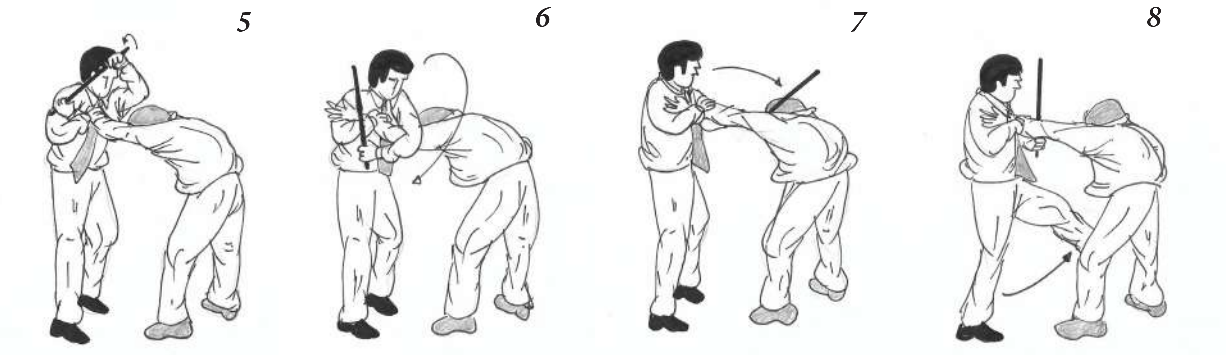


7.4 Defense against an Horizontal Inwards Stick Strike

This kind of attack is rarer, but possible, especially from a more proficient opponent, with maybe training in *Arnis* or *French Cane Fighting*. The principle stays identical: *go in where the stick is less effective*. And for this type of attack: go towards the inside of the attacking arm, because the closer you are, the less momentum has the arm has had. The best blocking maneuver is the ***full side protection*** also used against Circular Kicks, because you are not exactly sure at which height he is truly aiming. So, your forward arm is down for protection from shoulder level to mid-thigh, and your rear hand guards the head in an Outside Block Position.
Of course, with enough training and confidence, you can also dive in with a simple Block while attacking his eyes or throat, in true *Krav Maga* spirit. Both options will be illustrated.

In the first set of Illustrations, you see how to jump forward in a protected way to block the strike very close to the assailant. Bend you low-guarding arm to control his armed limb while using your forward momentum for a full-powered Elbow Strike to the head. Then naturally knee his groin. You can then keep with a *Retzev* of vicious Strikes, or go to the Disarm presented: Grab the stick-holding wrist and keep his arm in place with your own; grab the end of the stick, fulcrum-style, and pull it down violently. The Disarm is also an Inner Elbow Strike executed with all your body weight onto his own elbow. You can now use his own stick for a Backhand Downward hit on his skull, using the natural twist-back move of the hips. Kick his groin and keep at it…

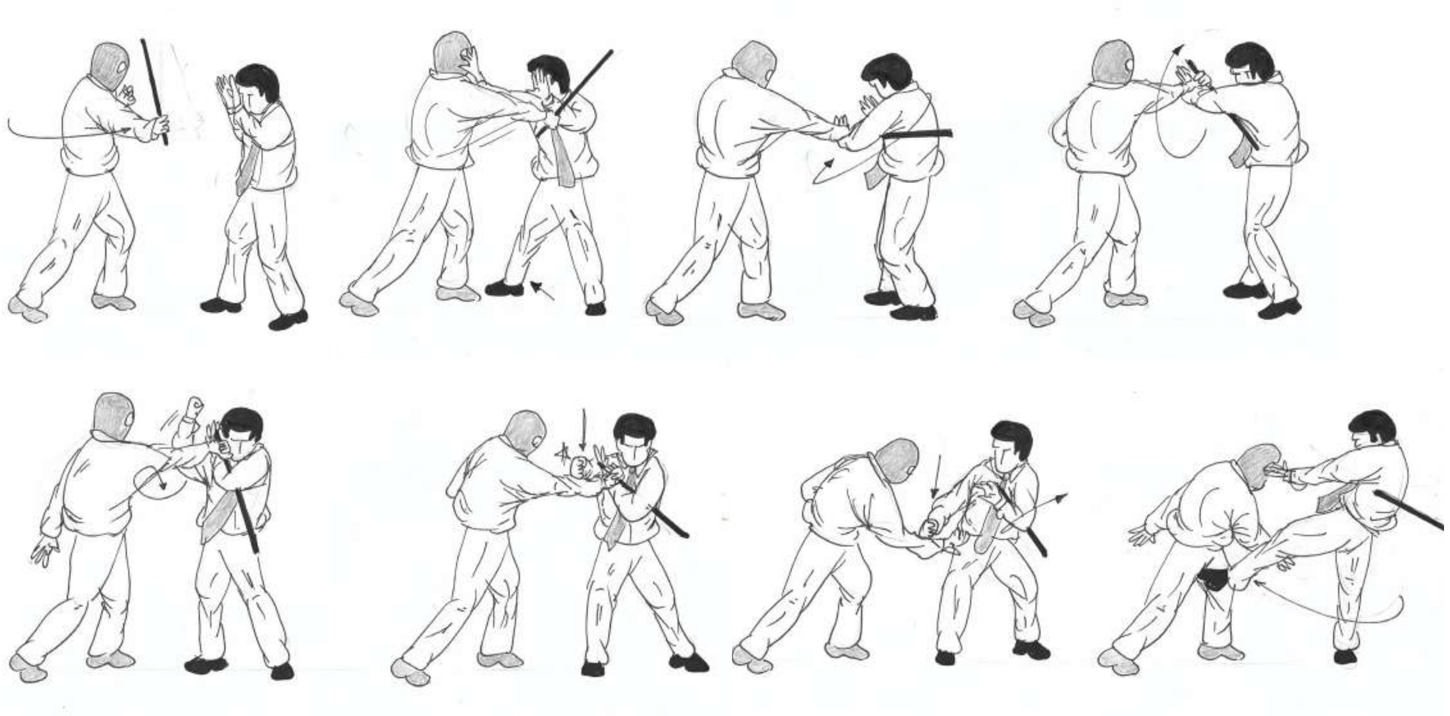




Dive in in protected blocking position and get control of his arm under yours while starting to strike and to disarm

The second set of Illustrations shows a simpler Dive forward with simultaneous Block and Eye Attack. This is the ideal *Krav Maga* move (but not always possible). You can then start a classic series of strikes to sensitive points, like we already know how to deliver. But the Drawings will, instead, illustrate a more sophisticated (but easy) Disarm. The reader is invited to drill both options: his own naturally flowing *Retzev*, and the *Disarm* (followed by a *Retzev* as well).

The Disarm comes from a very natural encircling of the striking arm, while the opponent is rattled by the eye strike. At the end of the encirclement, the stick is immobilized under your armpit. Strike his wrist powerfully with a Forearm/Hammer-fist Strike of your other arm. Simultaneously, you use your body to pull the stick out of his grab. Then use the Twist-back forward for a powerful Groin Kick that starts a relentless *Retzev*.



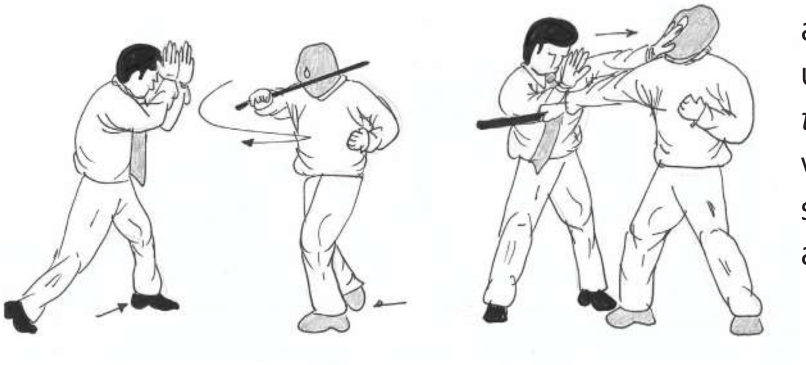
Dive, Block and Attack the eyes; then Disarm and follow up

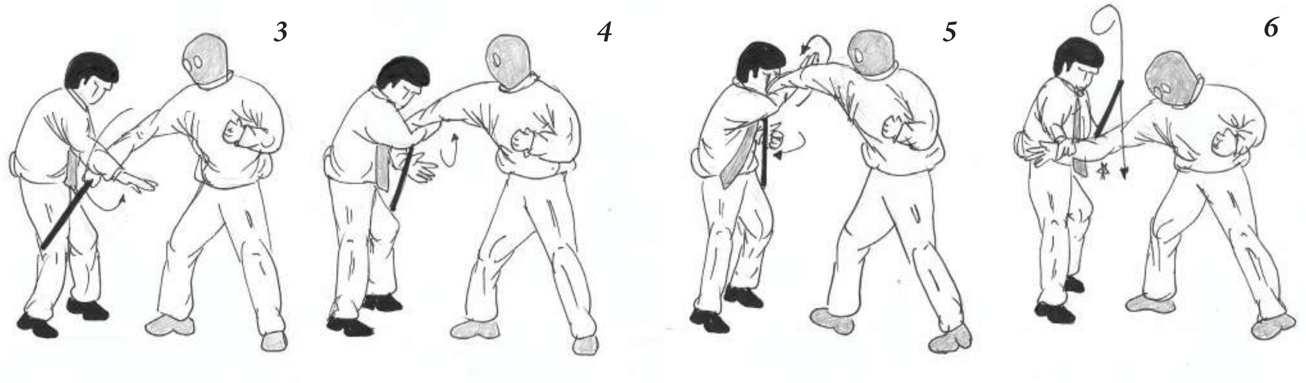
However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.
~Sir Winston Churchill

7.5 Defense against a Backhand Stick Strike

This is a more common attack, and even more it is a natural follow-up strike after a horizontal or diagonal inside strike: the attacker simply goes back into position with the backhand strike. It is quite a powerful strike, as it allows for the use of the hips, and it is imperative again to dive forward and early, before the attack has developed.
We are giving a few examples, of various levels of sophistication, but they all have the opening move in common: Jump forward diagonally and attack the assailant eyes while blocking or controlling the armed arm.

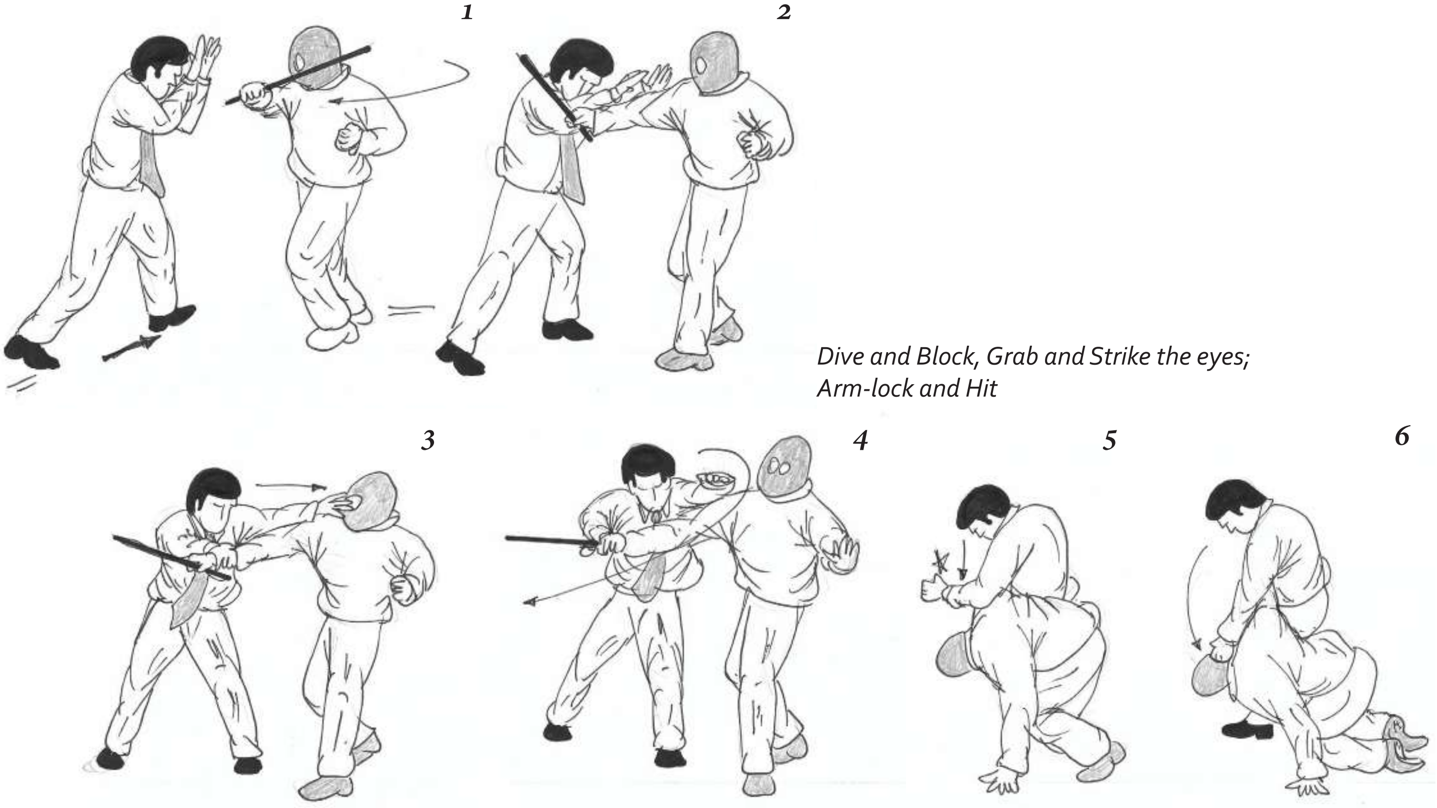
In the first example, you will follow the Eye Strike with a full encirclement of the arm that should end in a natural wrist grab. During the circular move, you will grab the end of the stick and lift it fulcrum-like for an easy disarm. You then immediately use his own stick for a hard strike *through* his elbow. Start a *Retzev*; I would suggest an Eye Poke with the stick followed by a Groin Kick, but it is all up to you.





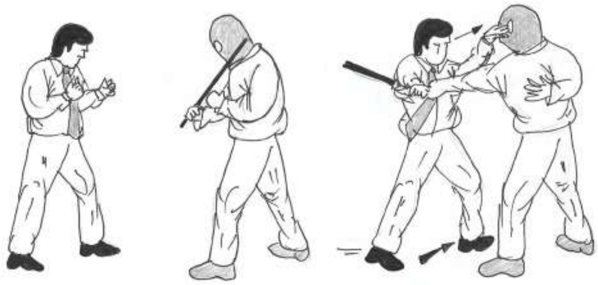
Dive in and out with an Eye Strike and a blocking control; disarm and start a Retzev

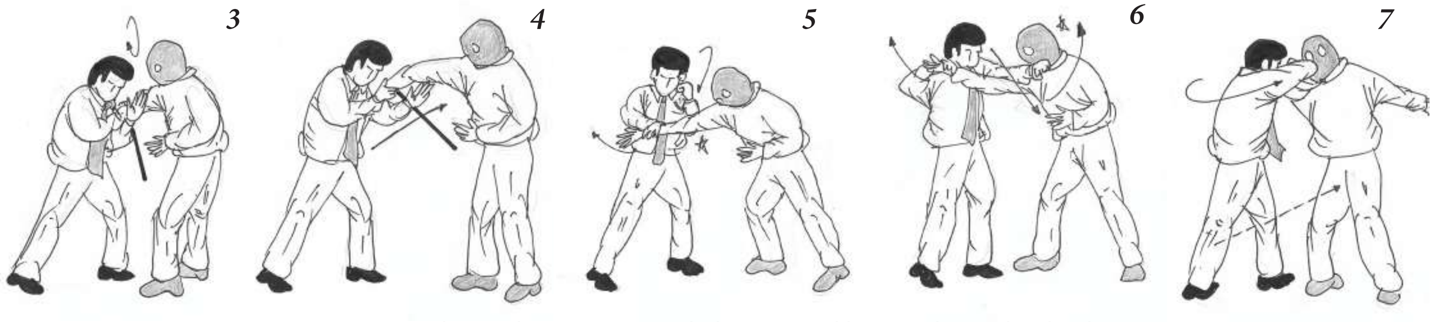
The second set of Drawings, at the top of next page, illustrates a Dive *forward and out* with a Double Block that turns into a simultaneous Grab and Eye Attack. As you are deeper inside, you can use your body to lock his weapon arm: pivot *brusquely* to hurt the joint. As he starts to bend forward, strike his shoulder with your elbow and hammer-fist his head. From there, you are on your own. You could push him all the way to the floor and stomp his elbow or hand. You could push him away and kick his face. Follow up according to the situation and your temperament.



Dive and Block, Grab and Strike the eyes; Arm-lock and Hit

The next example is slightly more complex and therefore requires more drilling, but it is very efficient. You dive in with the Eye Attack, like always. Grab the attacking wrist and twist it so the stick points down. Your other hand will come below his arm to disarm him by pushing up and out of his immobilized hand. It is much easier than these imperfect words. Try it, it is easy and natural. This Disarm does not give you the stick but lets it fall to the floor. But the disarm movement lends itself naturally to a Forearm Strike *through* his elbow, that smoothly turns into an outside Hammer-fist Strike to the throat or the side of his neck. Start a *Retzev* with a Circular Elbow Strike *through* the head powered by the hips and that pulls up your knee towards his groin. Keep at it.

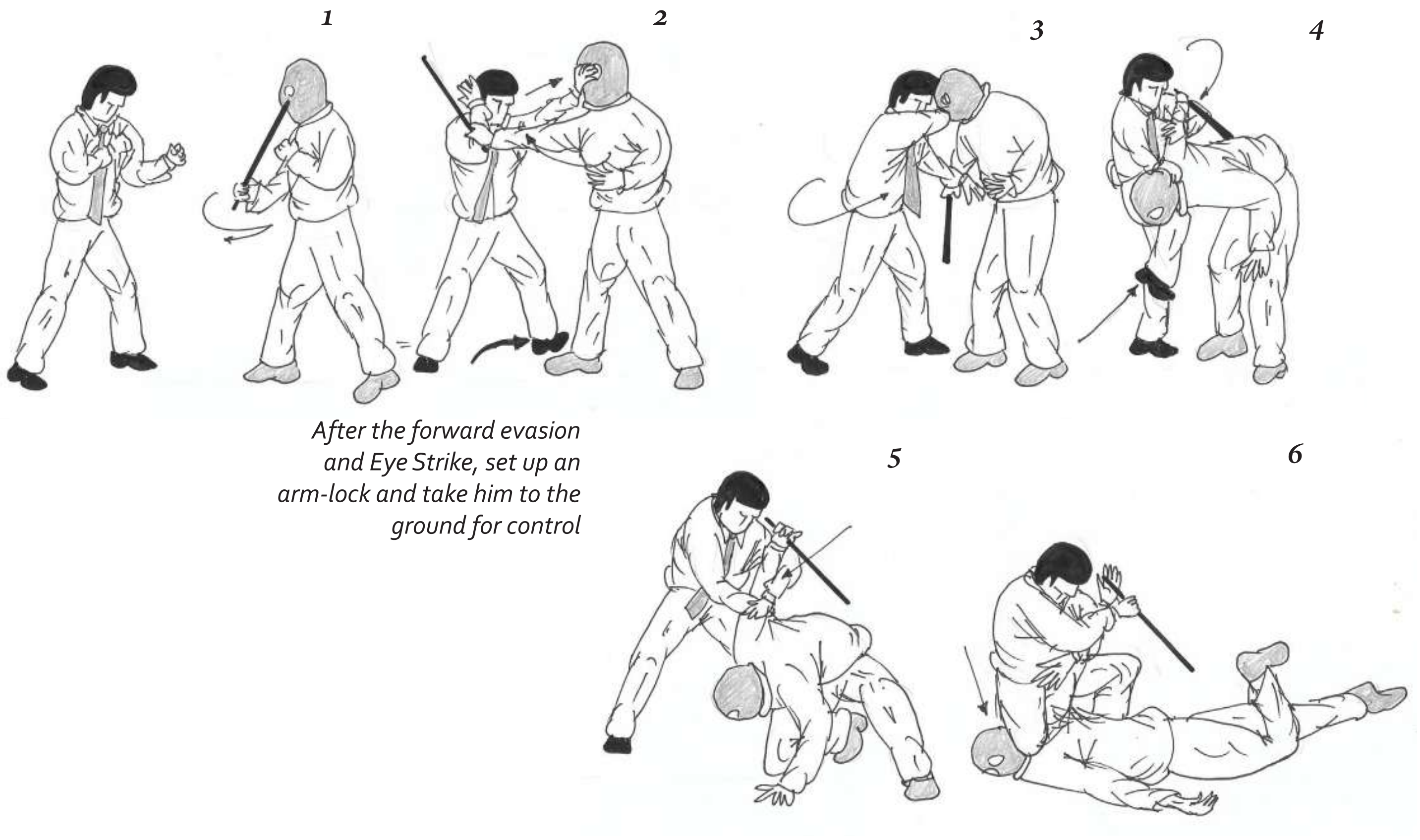




Dive, Strike, Grab, Disarm, Attack the joint and keep striking relentlessly

Our last example will show how to get the assailant to the ground for control, as can sometimes be required. [*The reader is reminded that submission of an assailant is relevant only in a controlled situation in which there is no danger of an accomplice jumping you from the back*].

The Illustrations show, again, how to dive, block and attack the eyes. You will then use your eye-striking arm to encircle his weapon arm from the outside up. As soon as the way is clear, you attack his face with your elbow, in order to mellow him for the setting of your Arm-lock. Your Elbow Strike turns into a *violent* lowering of his head towards your upcoming knee. Pull him down brusquely to the ground with the Arm-lock (more precisely shoulder lock) and place your knee onto the back of his neck. You can either place the knee for control, or strike down with the knee with force (*dangerous*!) according to the circumstances. In this position, you hold the assailant down with the Armlock control and you can easily disarm him.

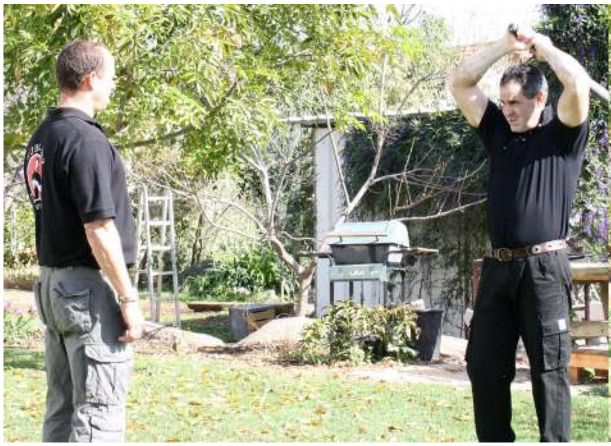


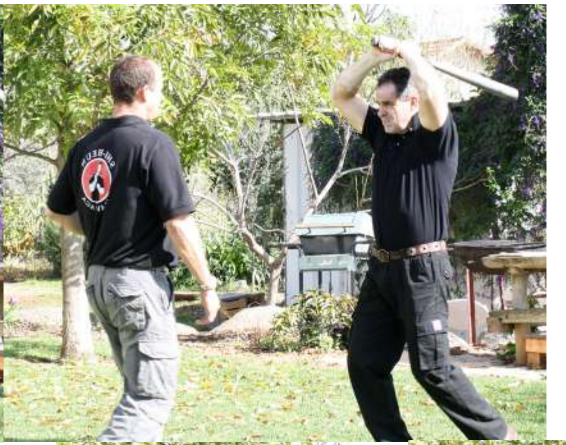
After the forward evasion and Eye Strike, set up an arm-lock and take him to the ground for control

“Difficulties strengthen the mind, as labor does the body”
Seneca

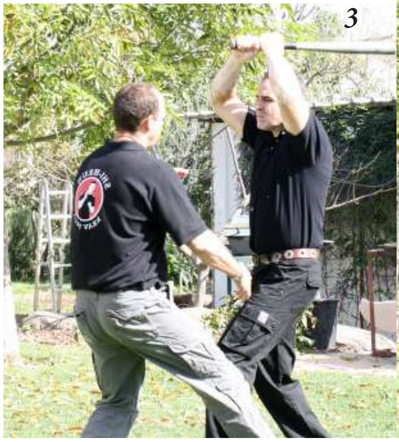
7.6 Defenses against Baseball Bat Attacks

The use of **Baseball Bats** for aggression is pretty common, even in countries where Baseball is not a thing. It is because the baseball bat is thicker at its extremity and delivers more energy at impact than a regular stick (This is the principle of the '*Masse d'Arme*' of the Middle Ages). The bat is also manipulated with both arms which gives it even more power, power that can be further boosted by the use of a body twist.
A bat is therefore a very dangerous weapon, not to be taken lightly. It usually targets the head to bash the skull and cause brain concussion.
These were the bad news. The good news in turn, are the fact that it requires large and noticeable chambering; and that, requiring both arms, it neutralizes the opponent's arms and prevents their use for blocking or feinting or…
Again, dealing with a Baseball Bat will require going *towards the attack*, and not back. The closer you will be to the opponent, the less in danger you will be. So, dive in diagonally *as early as possible*, and fearlessly. He will not be expecting you to come towards the danger, and it will rattle him. Of course, the earlier is the better: preferably preemptively, before he is even set to start his attack. If you miss that opportunity, then you must strive to use his chambering move to attack as he is fully opening himself (just like in the section of the Overhead Stick Strike).

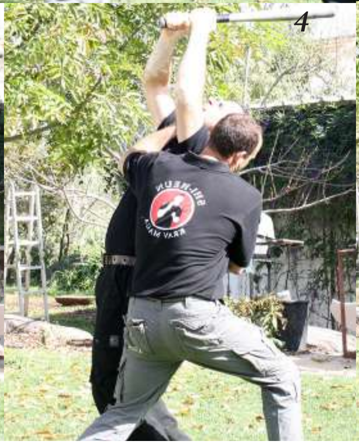




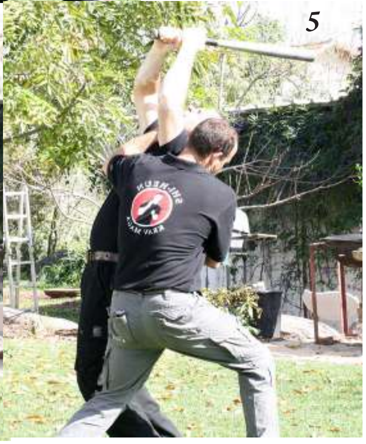
Jump diagonally forward as early as possible



3



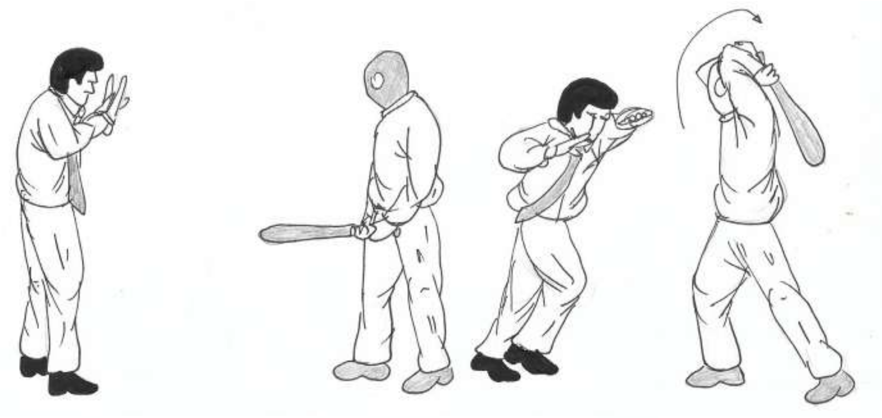
4

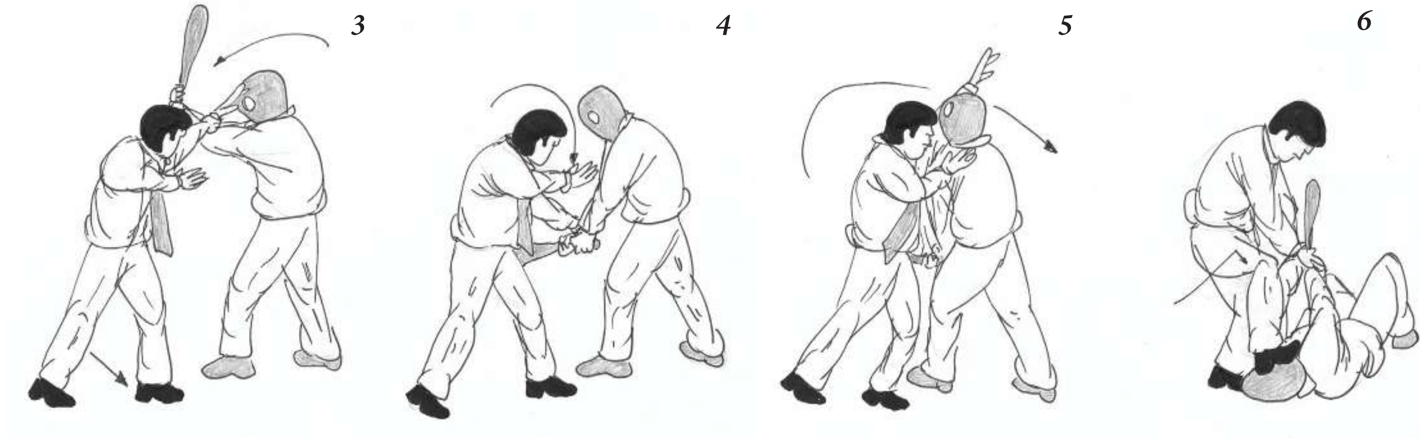


5

The fact that the attacker has to use *both hands* to attack is going to be of good use in the follow-ups: both arms are together and can be dealt with in that way, without him being able to block or grab anything. The coming examples will make that clear.

The first set of Drawings illustrates the diagonal dive forward and the *deviating of the opponent's arms*. It is not a 'hard' block, but the inflection of the trajectory without stopping its momentum. You lower his hands, and, from this position, come back up and forward with a violent '**Clothesline**' move. Connect hard with your forearm into his throat or face and go forward and through. This will get him to the ground. Stomp his face while pulling the bat out of his hands. Follow up.



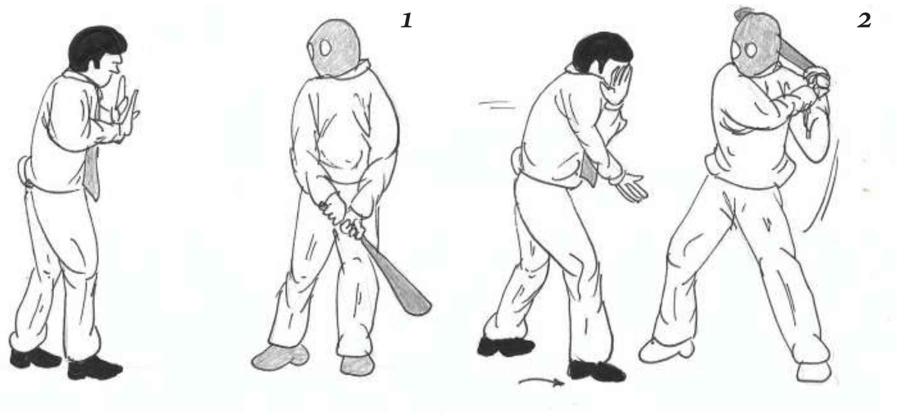


Dive diagonally forward as early as possible and 'clothesline' him

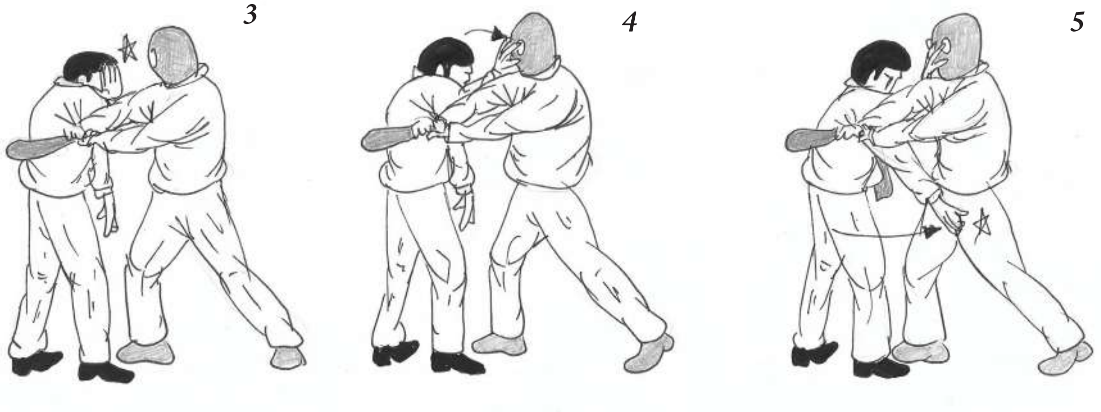
The **horizontal** (or diagonally downward) **attack** is pretty common with the Baseball Bat, because of the skull bashing intention. All principles remain identical to what we have already seen.

In the Figures at the top of next page, you see how to dive forward in the protected position already encountered. Simple. Attack the eyes immediately with your upper hand, and follow with a Groin Slap with the lower hand. You could keep the fingers into his eyes while slapping if you want. Start a *Retzev* and let the strikes rain until he is fully vanquished. This move his easy and simple, what is not to like?

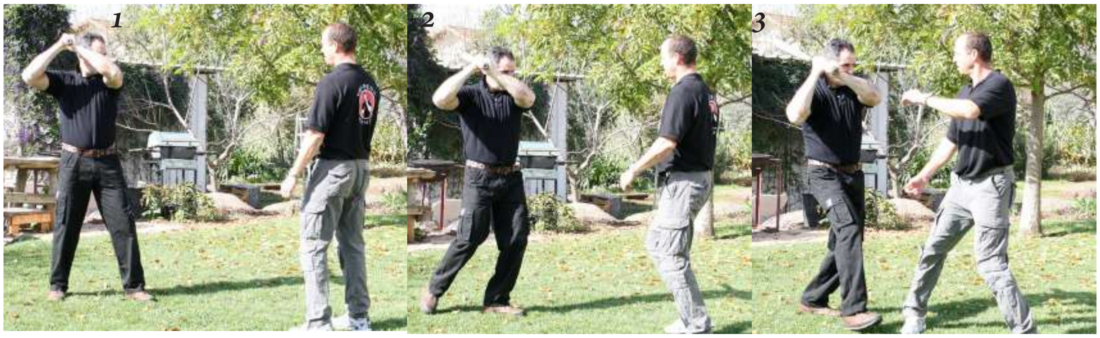
➔



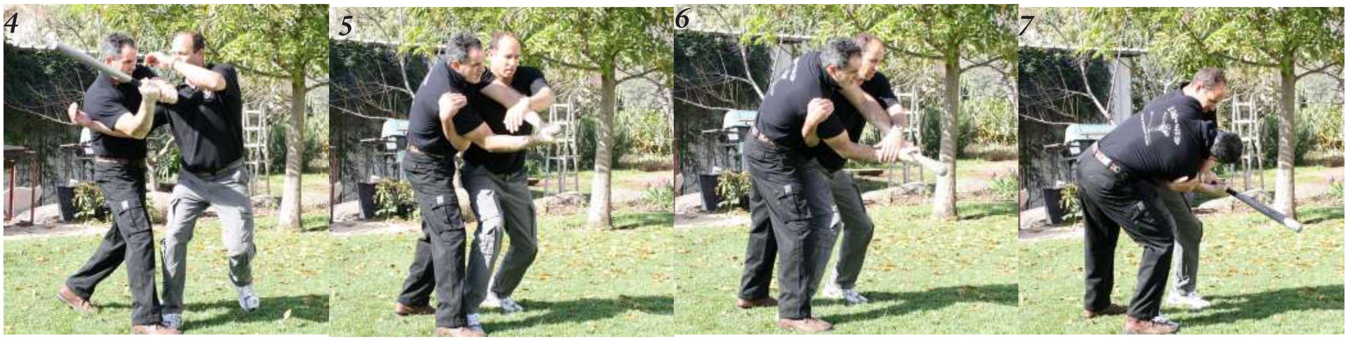
Jump diagonally forward in protective arms set-up; then attack eyes and testicles



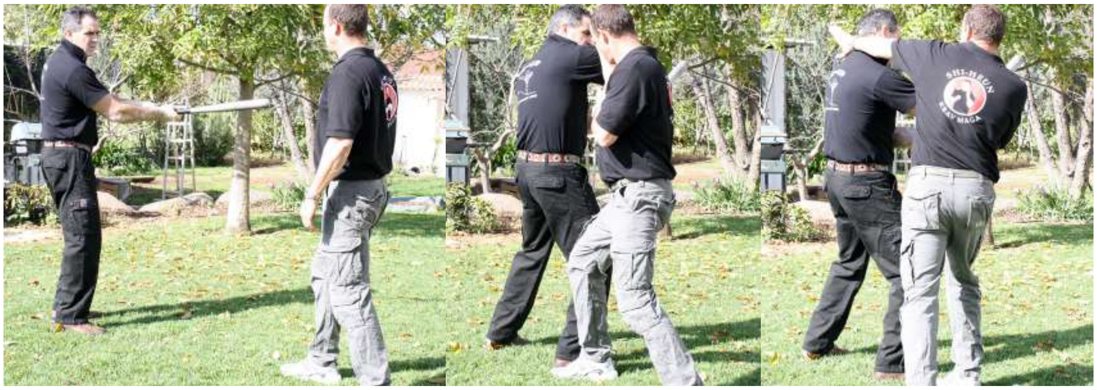
One of the things that can be done about a diagonal bat strike is to use its big momentum **to send the assailant to the ground**. The Photos below illustrate how to evade forward in order to blend into the opponent's effort in order to use his energy against him. As per the principle of 'breaking an unlocked door' you hold him in Shoulder Throw position and 'help' him to keep going forward and down. As he falls on the ground, you can go after him and stomp his fingers, wrist, elbow, ankle or even head.



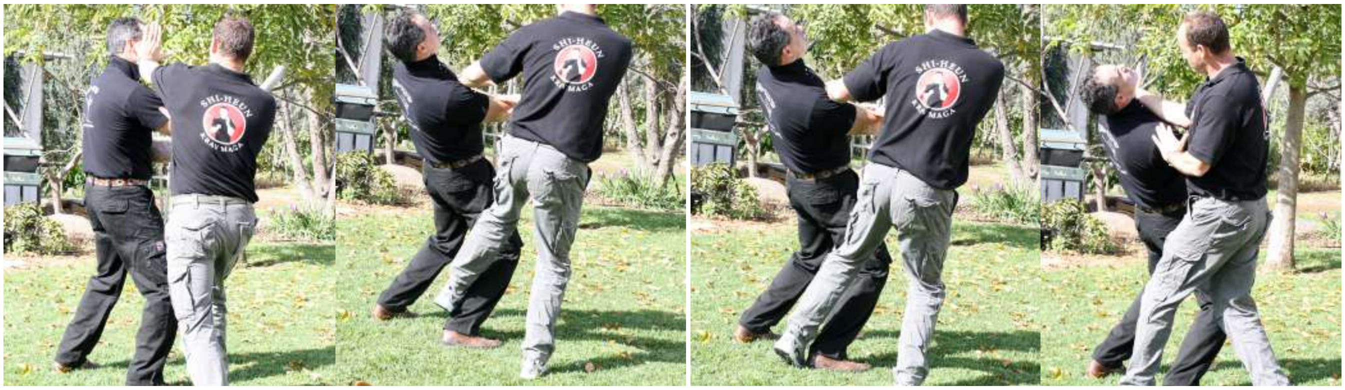
Use the assailant's momentum to throw him to the ground with an easy Shoulder Throw



Of course, if you prefer striking to grappling, the coming Photos show you another way to go. You will start, as always, with a forward jump and control/block as he prepares to strike. Your rear hand is already on its way for a **Forearm Strike through the back of his neck**. Follow up immediately with a Palm Strike to his face and a Low Kick to the back of his knee to bend him backwards. Finish him with a Knife-hand Strike to the exposed throat.

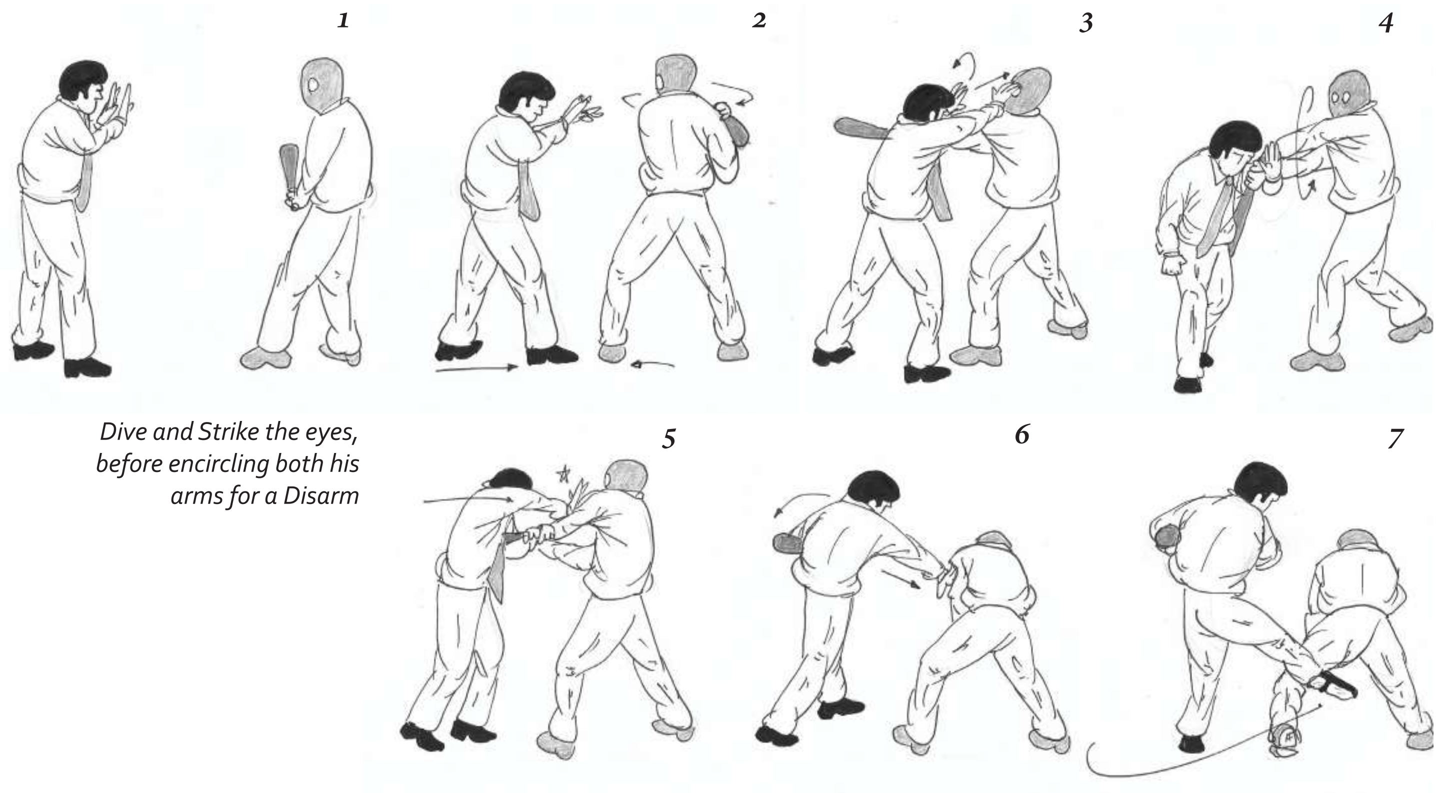


Go forward and block; begin a series of strikes to sensitive targets



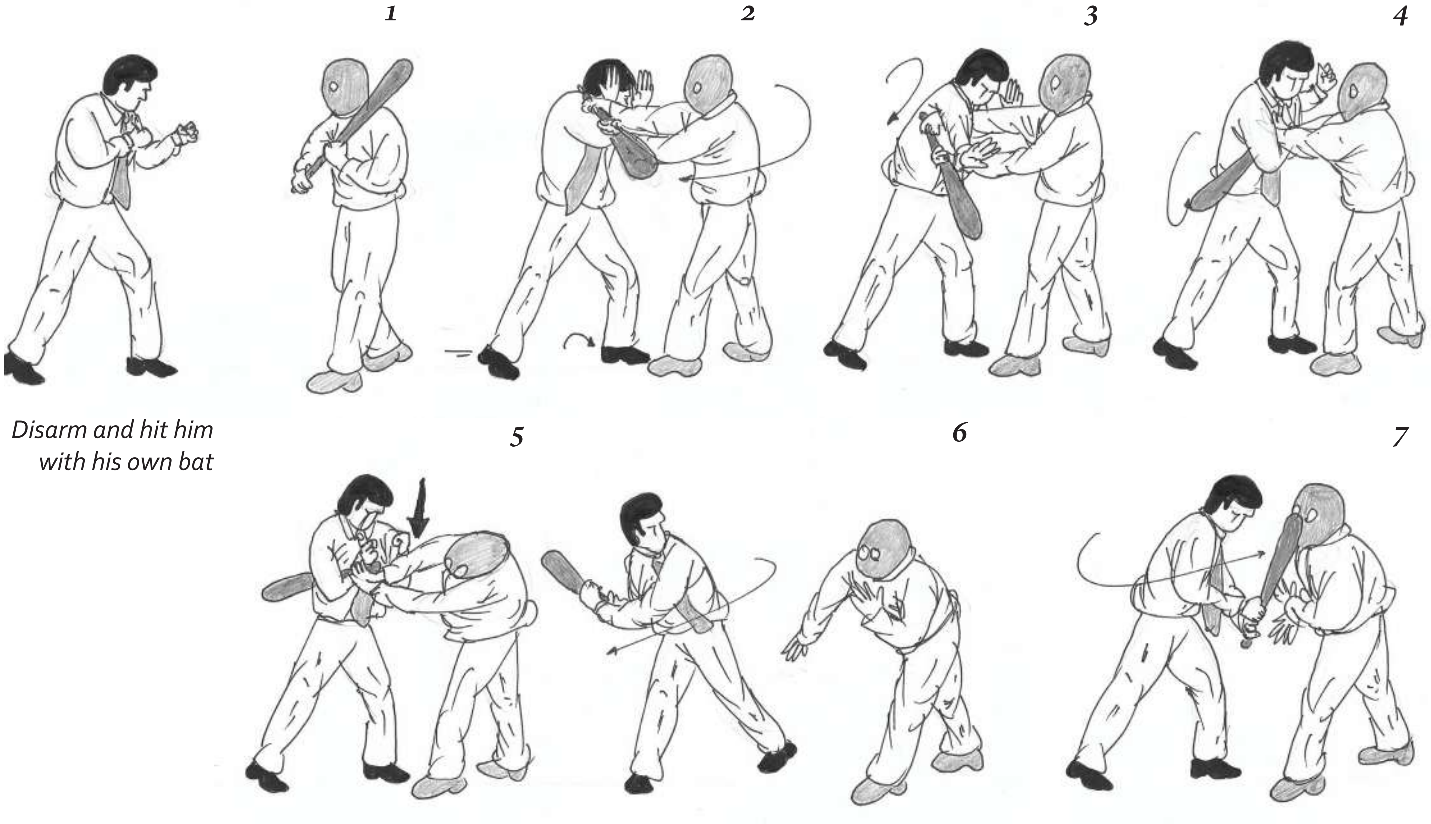
The two coming examples will illustrate your advantage of having the assailant holding the bat with two hands: it will make the **Disarm** easy!

The first Drawings at the top of next page, show, again, the forward Dive and Eye attack. You can then encircle both his arms together with your rear arm, in a large body-driven move. Strike his caught elbow with your palm, while pulling back with your body the bat that is stuck under your armpit. The Palm Strike must both hurt the joint and push his arms back: Strike *through*! Follow up with a naturally flowing ‘Low Kick’ and keep striking.

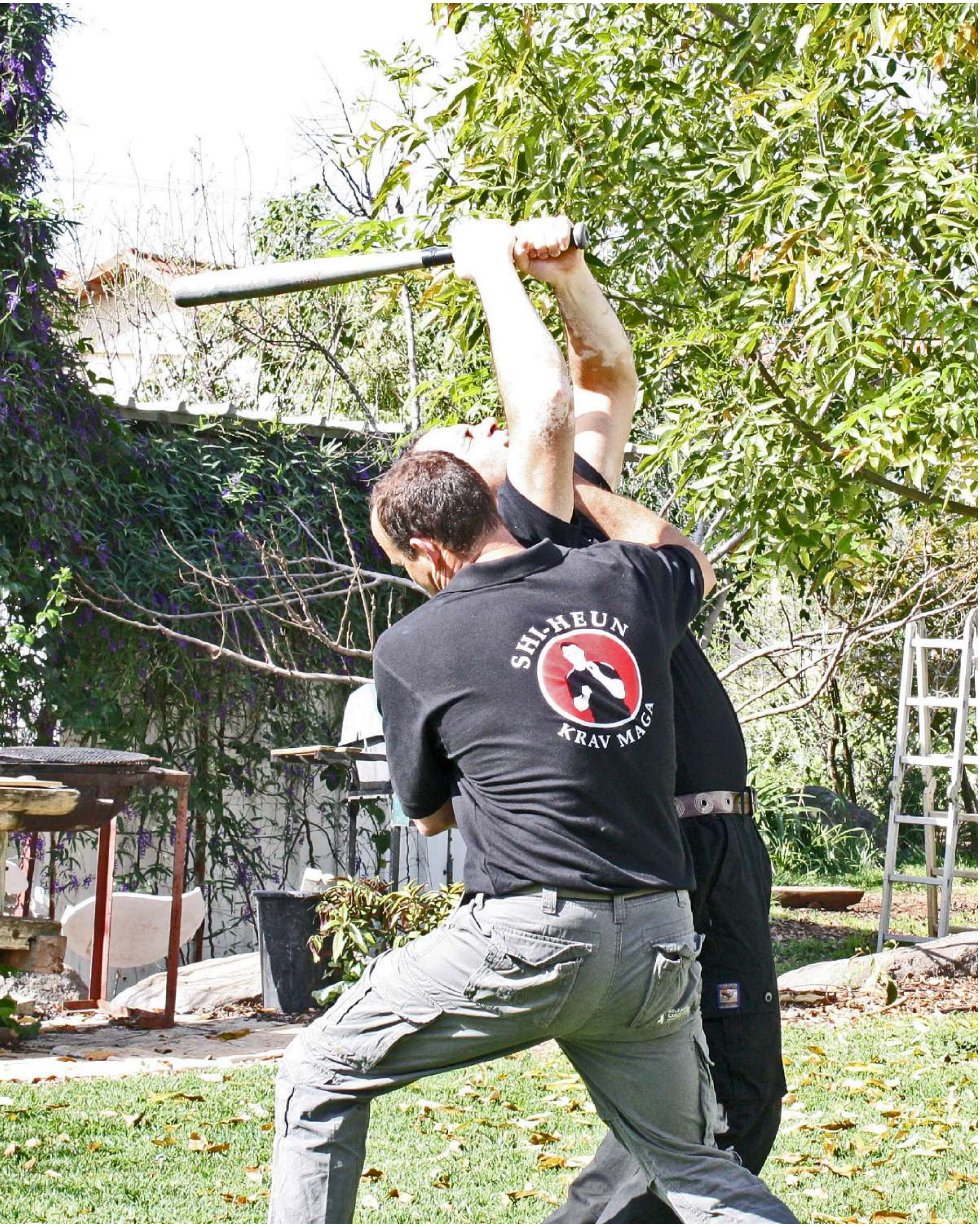


Dive and Strike the eyes, before encircling both his arms for a Disarm

The next and last example is nearly identical to the previous one, but the Strike to the elbow is different and allows for a **Disarm in which you get control of the bat** for a mean Counterstrike.



Disarm and hit him with his own bat


SHI-HEUN
KRAV MAGA

PART Eight

Defenses against Knife Attacks

הגנה מפני התקפות סכין

8.1 The Knife

A **Knife** is a lethal weapon! Simple.

Do not let Hollywood make you believe that handling a knife-wielding attacker is easy. It is extremely difficult and dangerous, and nearly impossible against a well-trained attacker (Thankfully, predators and muggers are not into the discipline and hard training work required).

This simple fact leads to a very important conclusion: **avoid fighting against a knife at all costs!** There is no shame in running away or in giving up your wallet; or both. If you can, run away (towards light, crowds, security forces, ...) while shouting for help. If it is appropriate, throw something towards your assailant before starting the sprint of your life: dirt, coins, your wallet, your purse, your coffee or anything else at hand. **There is no shame to running away from an extremely unfair fight or from a life-threatening situation**.

It is important to understand that a sharpened knife does not require force to hurt or kill: it cuts and penetrates literally like into butter. A simple cut can completely freeze your psychological ability to fight; think of suddenly seeing your own blood flowing out in quantity. A compromised artery will have you dead in a matter of minutes. Even a small poke can cause irreparable damage to internal organs. An easy slash can severe tendons and blood vessels, causing loss of control on limbs and huge flows of blood. Do not underestimate how easy it is to win a fight with a knife!

You should also realize that **you have no idea how you will react to even a minor cut**. The best trained individual could undergo a severe psychological shock at seeing his own blood in a fight and even freeze totally. This is not a sign of weakness, but simply physiological. Training gradually towards using a real knife should help prepare coping for such things, but there is no guarantees (see next section). Therefore, **always run if you can!**

Of course, there are situations where there is no escape: when it is clear that giving up your wallet will not save you, when the escape route is closed, when a loved one is being attacked, when your physical or sexual integrity is being threatened, when the knife is used to force you to change your location with your assailant, and in the case of amok stabbing by a terrorist. Then you fight! Then you fight the *Krav Maga* way: aggressively forward and targeting the eyes and throat of the opponent, all the way.

Knife is here used as a generic term for anything short that can cause cuts and stabs: it could be a screwdriver, a cutter, a broken bottle, a pair of scissors, ... The previous warnings, the handling principles and the techniques stay the same.

And all this brings us to another point: against a knife, **try to make use of any suitable everyday object at hand**, either to protect yourself or to attack. Examples will be given in the last Chapter of the book. But think of throwing coins, dirt or hot beverage towards the assailant's eyes. Think of using a chair, a suitcase or a bag as a shield. Think of using your umbrella as a poking weapon (eyes), a screwdriver as a knife for you, anything that can help goes...

8.2 Training for Knife Defenses

The previous section has made clear that Knife Defenses will require serious training, which importance cannot be minimized. Training must be intensive, repetitive, realistic and brushed off regularly. It is a trivial statement, but important to understand and apply. Anything else would be wasted time.

1. **Use a rubber knife and drill the techniques as they are presented**; start slowly and increase speed gradually. It is imperative that your partner attacks realistically: a poke to the belly targets the center of the belly with force, and not sideways 'in-order-to-help-you'. Your partner must understand that helping you is executing the most realistic attack possible.
2. **Once the technique is mastered, it should be drilled at full speed and power**. Your partner attacks you at random time intervals and tries to score with his knife.
3. **You can then add a few other possible attacks to the repertoire that can be chosen from by your partner.** He will attack you, with no warning with a stab, or a downward strike, or a slash. You will have to defend yourself accordingly. At that stage, you should let your own *Retzev* take over (if you feel it is appropriate) after the basic defense.
4. The next stage of training will require an **additional partner whose role is to increase your level of stress**. During your drilling, he will suddenly shout at you, move around, distract you, touch you, and even push you around. Of course, this must be all done gradually. But make no mistake, this is a very important phase of the training.

5. The next stage will be to prepare you psychologically for a real encounter: **the knife you are confronting should gradually become real**. It is extremely important, because of the possible ‘freezing’ reaction that can happen to anybody in real life: seeing a real sharpened knife aimed at you could completely stress you out and cause you to lose your ability to react as drilled. This is not cowardice or anything to be ashamed of, but an atavistic unconscious reaction to stress. Therefore, you will repeat all the phases of training covered, but with a wooden knife which will cause hurt and pain when it will connect. Start drilling seriously and prepare some analgesic ointments for after-training.

6. The last stage of training is to repeat all the training stages with **a real metal knife, but blunted**. You should never use a sharp knife for training: the simplest mistake could be fatal. Even then, this kind of training *is only to be done under the supervision of an accredited Krav Maga or Martial Arts instructor*. For added safety, the trainee should wear protection like a body shield and padded clothing. The training should start very slowly and carefully; speed and force should be increased very *gradually*. The only thing that must not change is the realistic trajectory of the attack, without which the drilling is meaningless. This stage is for advanced and well trained *Kravists* only. Be exceedingly careful.

8.3 Training Progression

We shall present a whole array of defenses against all sorts of knife attacks, classified by the general type of attack. These defenses will be explained **in the order in which they should be practiced and mastered**. And ultimately used…

It is important to work on the simplest defenses first and fully master them before progressing to the more sophisticated ones. It is not important to know many techniques, but it is vital to totally master them and to ingrain them into your muscle memory. In stress situations, your body will be on autopilot and use the most appropriate mastered maneuver. Mastering a technique requires a long time and hard training, and it should go through all the stages of training presented in section 7.2.

Starting with the simplest defenses will first make you ready for any encounter; it will also prepare you psychologically and physically to progressing to a more sophisticated technique that is also possible and maybe better adapted to your psychology. Once the next stage is mastered, your body will instinctively choose between the response most suitable to the situation, to your personality and to your physiology.

Here come the different levels of defense techniques against a knife threat or a knife attack:

➔

8.3.1 RUN.

You should work on your sprinting skills! This is no joke. As mentioned, always flee a confrontation against a knife if you can; there truly is no shame. Running should be your first option. You can start running after a fake body move or after distracting the would-be attacker by calling out to an imaginary friend behind him. Maybe you can push him aside and start running, or you can throw something towards his eyes first. You get the idea.

8.3.2 Attack preemptively.

If you cannot run away because it is too late, because the way is blocked or because you have to protect your loved ones, then an aggressive preemptive attack can change the situation. It can make the assailant rethink his intentions and maybe go and look for an easier victim. It can rattle him psychologically and make your further moves easier. It can open the way for you and/or you loved ones to start running. If you attack someone who expects you to cower, and if you do so before he even has concretized his own attack, you definitely hold the psychological upper end. Use it for further fighting or to disappear. It is the famous *Bruce Lee* who said: "**There's only one basic principle of self-defense: you must apply the most effective weapon, as soon as possible, to the most vulnerable target.**"
Attacking preemptively can mean the use of Kicks, of Body-bent Kicks or of Guard-neutralizing techniques already presented in this book. Whatever suits your personality.

8.3.3 Block & Strike.

The next stage of defense, if you have not been able to flee or attack preemptively, is to block whatever is on its way to you and to strike vital points nearly-simultaneously. This is a basic *Krav Maga* principle, and it means blocking aggressively forward. By going forward, you muddle your opponent's range calculations and expectations, and you also attack him psychologically. The simultaneous or nearly-simultaneous strike should target vital points only, usually the eyes or the throat. Then kicks in the most important *Krav Maga* principle: ***Retzev***! Do not stop striking until the assailant is neutralized, and keep attacking vital points, if possible only primary (groin) and secondary. A neutralized assailant should then be fully taken out with stomping joints strikes: fingers, wrist, elbow, knee and/or feet.
You should not proceed to more sophisticated defenses before you have totally mastered the preemptive and 'block & strike' level!

8.3.4 Wrist and Arm Locks.

Krav Maga do not use Armlocks and Wristlocks like *Ju Jitsu* and *Aikido*. In *Krav Maga*, a lock is not something to strive for, but something to use briefly in order to place the assailant in a certain position. *Krav Maga* is about survival and not about control. That is why the Locks of Krav Maga are executed **fast and violently** in order to *seriously damage the joints.* Moreover, *Krav Maga* Locks are never to be used before having 'mollified' the opponent with preparatory aggressive strikes to vital points.

It is important to understand that, in a life and death situation, you should not get into a meaningless grappling strength challenge about the control of the armed wrist or about succeeding the setting of a Lock. This is unnecessary and exceedingly dangerous.

It is much more difficult to set a Wrist Lock in real life than it seems from practice with a partner: your opponent will instinctively react with all his power to avoid it and you will find yourself in a tug-of-war about it. Doing so makes you lose the *Retzev*, and puts you at risk of losing control of the knife as you are very close.

To sum it up: **Lock-like moves must come immediately after a successful attack of a vital point, they must be short and violent, and they must be followed by more aggressive strikes.**

And it should be clear that these techniques require a lot of realistic training, going to all the necessary stages of training presented.

8.3.5 Disarmament.

Disarming an aggressor should not be the purpose of your defense; do not obsess about it. Disarming will come naturally if you have already inflicted enough damage to make it safe. Basically, you disarm him because you can and you have already won the fight.

It is important to understand that disarming an adrenalin-laden opponent is not as easy as it seems. Even if he is hurt, his body will instinctively hold the knife as hard as possible; and he will not let go. It is totally unnecessary to get into a tug-of-war about getting his weapon; much better will be to keep striking his vital points and keep destroying his joints. When adequate, you conclude the fight by releasing him of his weapon hold.

An illustration of the 'holding on' phenomenon in fighting, and the inability to think straight used to be given by *Jigoro Kano* when presenting his well-thought *Ju-jitsu*-style in early times. [*It would be strongly condemned nowadays by Animal-cruelty activists, and rightfully so,but these were very different times*] He had someone hold up a dog by his tail, head down; the poor dog was always trashing around to try to attack the hand holding his tail, when in fact it would have been easier for it to claw or even bite the body of the guy holding it. Forget stubborn holding in a fight, and condition your body to concentrate on the real targets...

➤

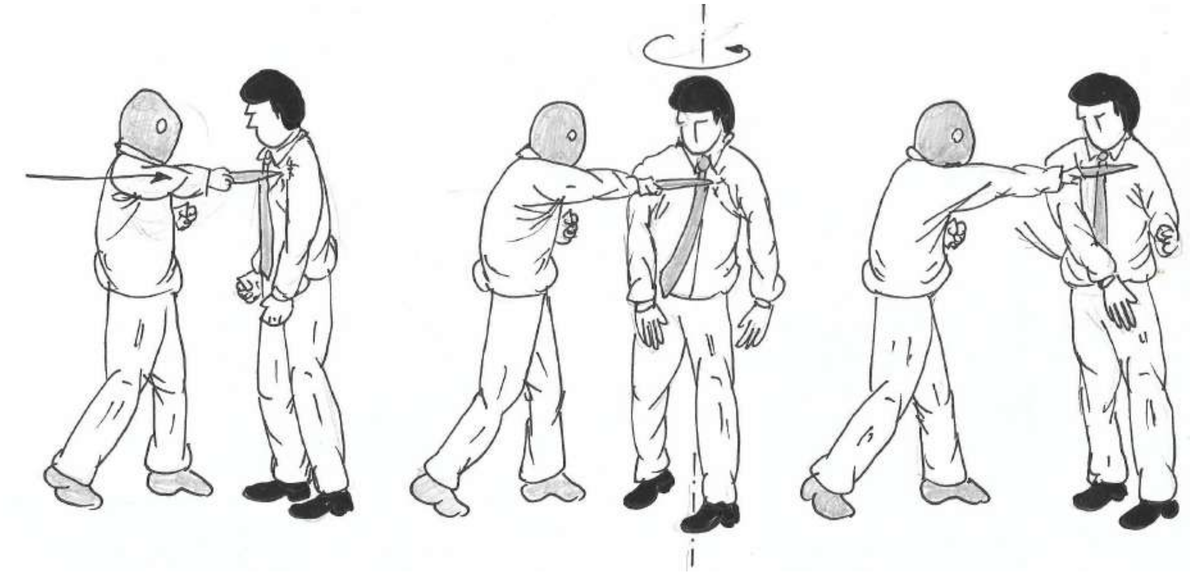
...The techniques themselves for peeling off the knife from his fingers are pretty simple and will be presented in the relevant examples.

8.3.6 Using his own knife against him.

These techniques are iconic of *Krav Maga*, but it should be understood that they are **the last stage** and require a lot of work and total mastery. On top of the obvious irony, these maneuvers have the advantage to be extremely aggressive, for a fast neutralization of an attacker. It can be important to deal with an attacker fast and decisively; a stabbing 'amok' terrorist attack comes to mind. An interesting side benefit of such techniques is that your prints should nowhere be on the stabbing knife, which could help avoid lots of serious complications, even if your reaction is clearly legally justified...
Do not attempt these defenses before you have mastered all previous stages. Then work hard at them in the most possible realistic way.

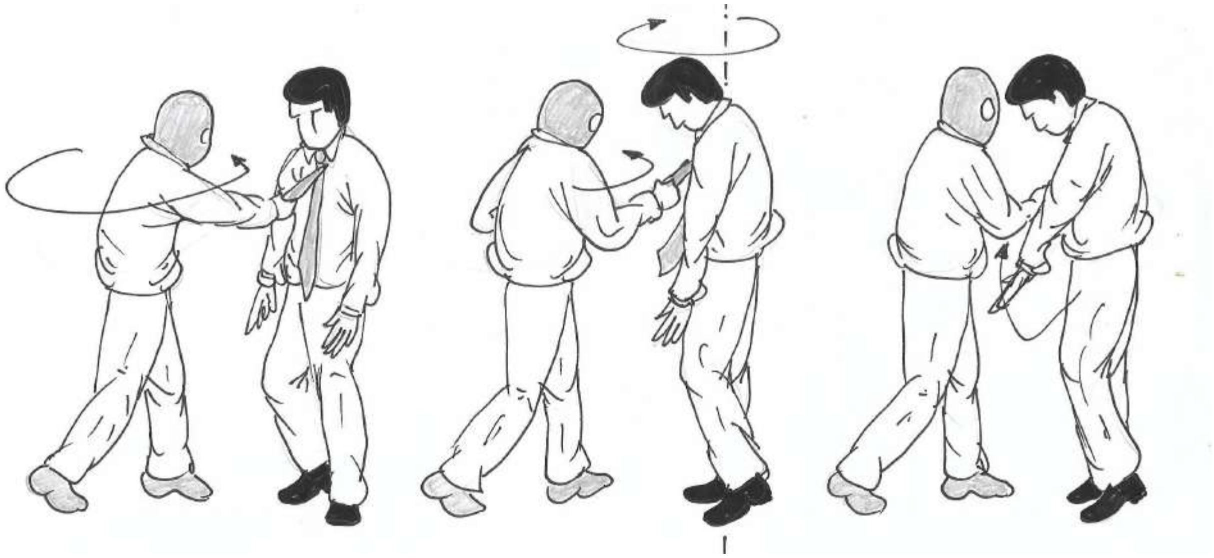
8.4 Minimizing damage

Before we start, there are two drills that are important to do at the start of all training sessions about Knife Self-defense. Anyone training seriously for the possibility of a knife fight should expect the possibility of being wounded. An important skill to acquire is the instinctive reaction to knife contact in order to minimize the damage inflicted. The basic idea is simply of going with the knife strike in order to dissipate its energy and remove the straight-on target. Like everything else in self-defense training, it is about lots of drilling to make it automatic; if you have to think about it, it will be too late anyway. Therefore, purposeful and serious drilling with a partner is imperative.
The two drills are presented on next page. Start by having a partner poking or slashing you *slowly* with a knife and you reacting just before full contact. Gradually increase speed, and then have your partner to poke fast at random. Then have him target closer and closer to your centerline, which will force you to instinctively evade more.
The first set of Drawings, at the top of next page, illustrates how to instinctively deal with a **poke**: "go" with the strike by pivoting in place. Your shoulders power the twist, with one shoulder pulling the target away, and the other coming in with the arm to deviate (block) the poking trajectory. It is simple to understand and to execute, but it should be drilled endlessly.



Drill the twisting evasion to dissipate the impact of a poking attack

The second set of Illustrations shows how to 'accompany' a **slashing blow** by twisting and pulling back. The shoulder will again pull the 'outside' arm to strike the slashing arm out of trajectory, in kind of a block. Again, the principle is easy to understand, but practice makes perfect!



Drill the twisting evasion against a connecting slash attack

These exercises will only be of help if they are regularly drilled, in spite of lacking 'sexiness'.
So, drill, drill, drill.

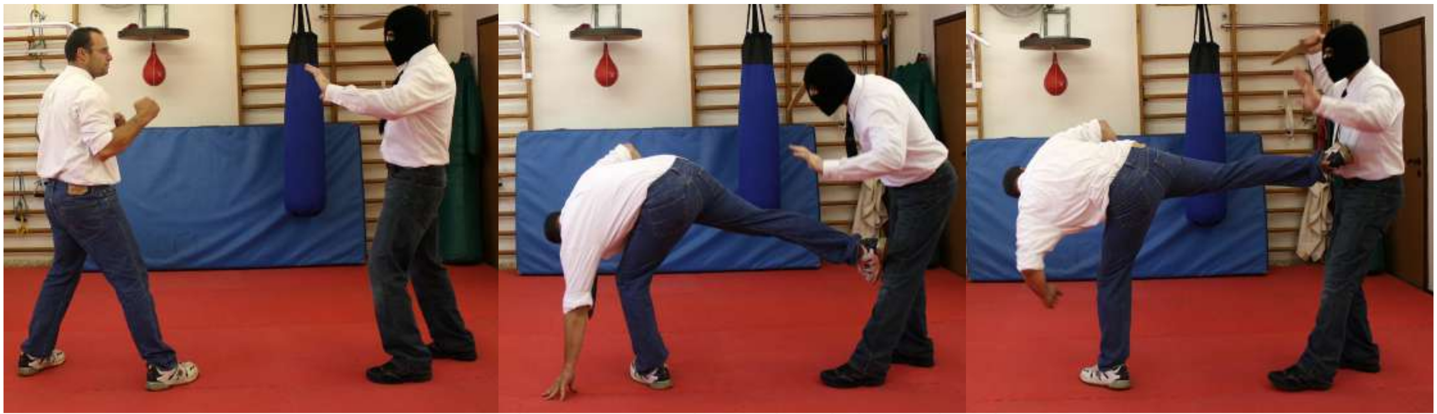
No plan of action ever survives contact with the enemy.
~Helmuth von Moltke the Elder

8.5 Preemptive attacks against a knife-wielding attacker

Needless to repeat ourselves again about the advantages of preemptive attacks. The success will be highly dependent upon the effect of surprise, the aggressiveness and the speed of closing the gap. In other words: **explode forward with everything you have!** Trust your gut instinct if someone approaches you while holding something hidden away; let your sixth sense do the work. Strike as soon as there is the hint of a threat or of getting in too close a range. Even a knife held down in a non-threatening manner is a threat and a real danger. Take the initiative.

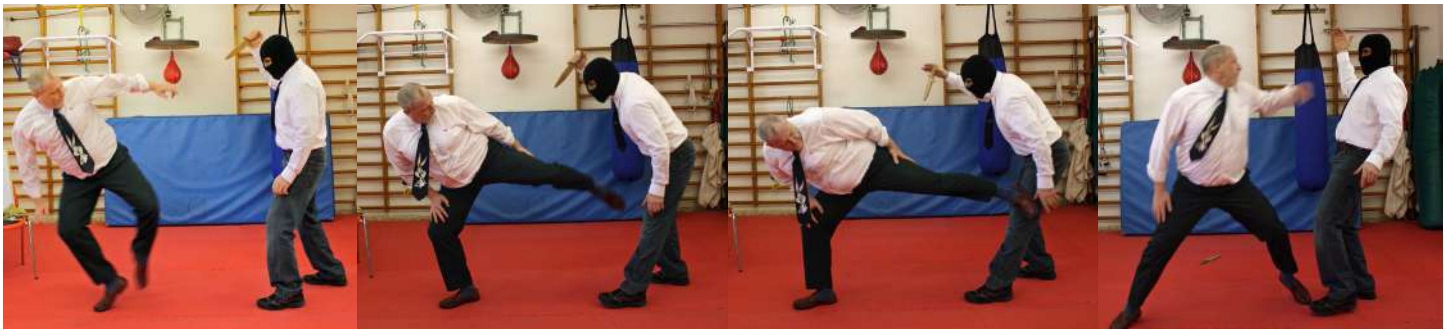
The reader is invited to refer to Chapter Five and consult the sections about 'Range Covering' and 'Guard Closing'. Most techniques presented can be used against a knife-wielding assailant, and they should be drilled so. We shall not re-present them here. Of course, remember the *Retzev*!
Another way to deal with an approaching threat is the 'Body-bent' Kick: you kick the would-be attacker in the knees or groin while keeping your upper body away from a possible knife strike. Your aggressive surge forward will surprise him and allow you to keep kicking until he backs off or is vanquished. You can also follow-up with a Guard Closing technique before continuing your *Retzev*.

The first set of Photos illustrates a kicking combination that stops an advancing attacker and will allow for following up. Side-kick his front knee while bending away and let your foot rebound for a higher Side Kick to the ribs or lower belly that will keep him away. Make sure you kick hard *through* the knee to stop him and cause damage. And follow up after the second kick, with more kicks, groin attacks, guard closing techniques ,...



Stop a threatening assailant with Body-bent Side Kicks

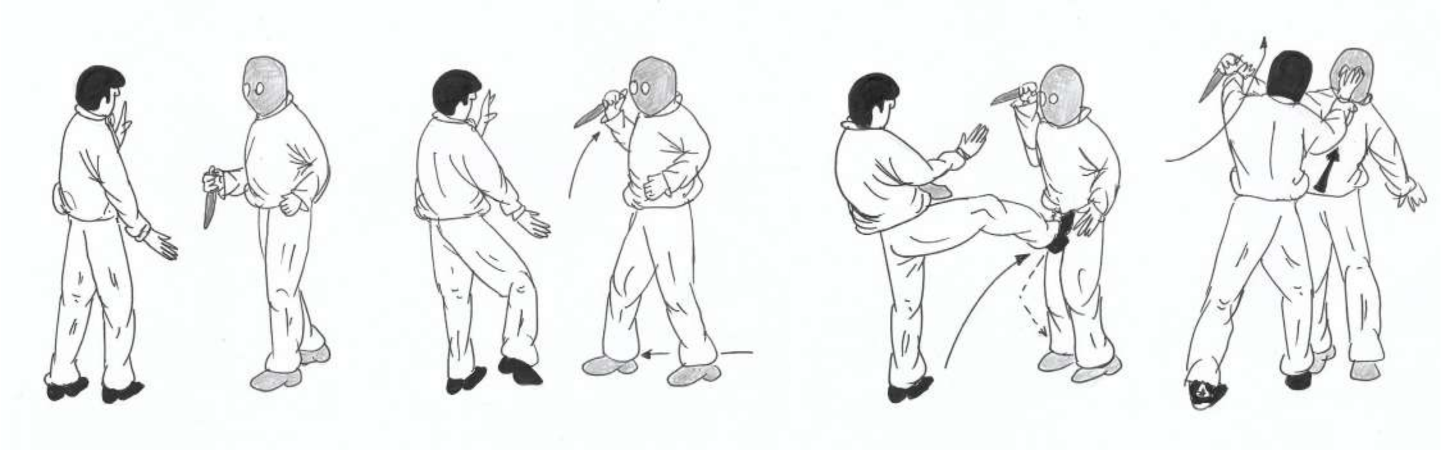
Another example is presented in the next Photos. This time, the first **Body-bent Kick** is a fast Hopping-forward groin Roundhouse, followed by a knee Side Kick. You can then close the distance aggressively to control his armed hand and start your *Retzev*.



Stop an approaching knife-wielding assailant with a groin Body-bent Roundhouse and follow up

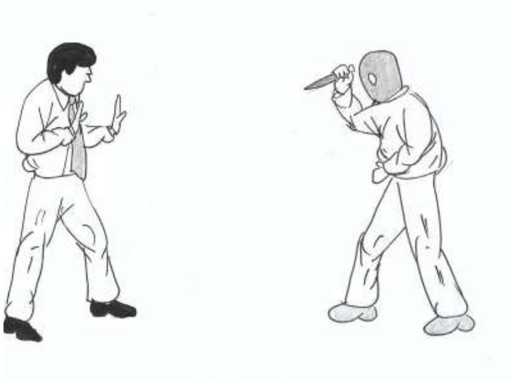
Of course, the preemptive kicks need not be Body-bent if this is not a technique that you 'feel' is good for you. The simple straight **Penetrating Front Kick** is just as good. Drill all and see what comes out for you in free-fighting drills.

The coming set of Drawings illustrates the simplicity of this approach: a guy comes towards you with a knife, kick him in the general *groin* area as soon as he gets in range. You can follow up by getting control of his brandished armed hand while poking his eyes. Then, keep at it...

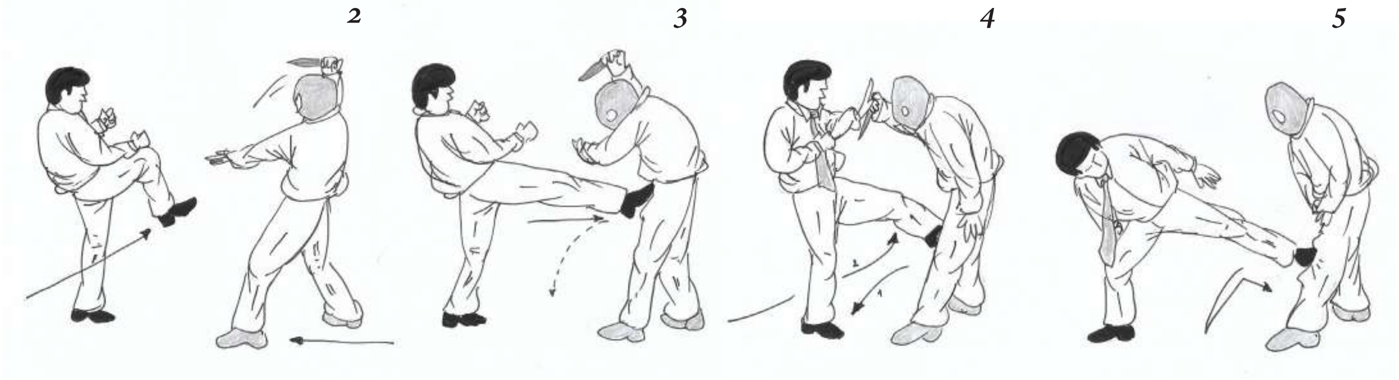


A simple Front Stop Kick will allow you to take the initiative from an approaching threat

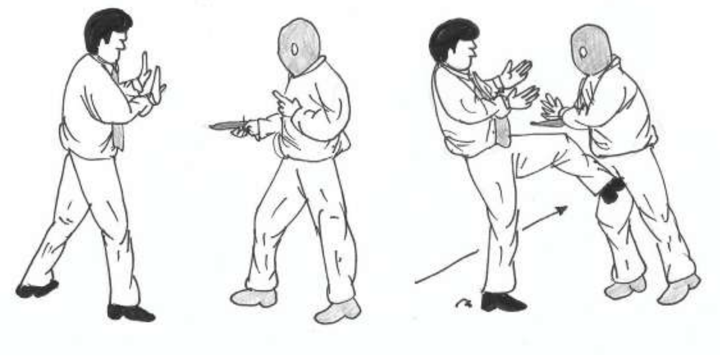
The next set of Illustrations, at the top of next page, shows that you should start your kicking as early as relevant from your technical point of view. **Attack as early as possible**, especially if you have mastered a *long forward-going Penetrating Front Kick*. Target the general lower belly/groin area and follow up, in this example with a short Front Upward 'real' groin Kick, and a joint-destroying Stomping Side kick to the knee.



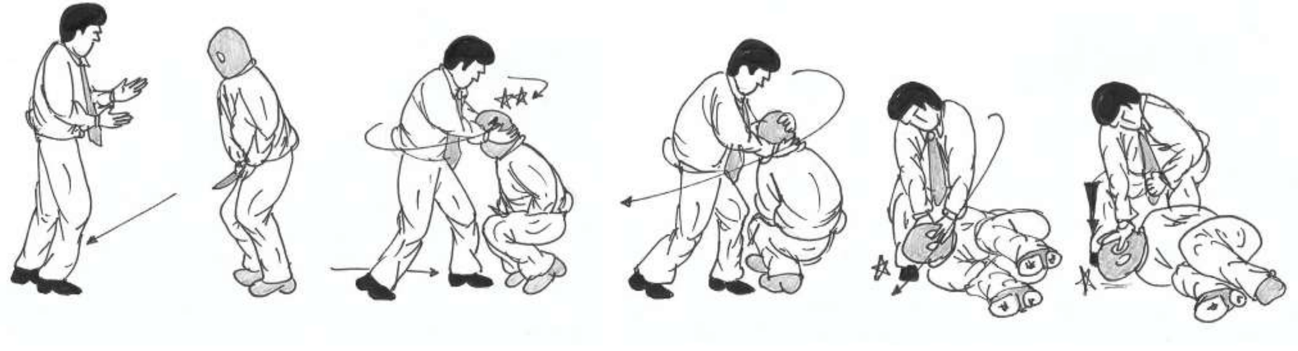
Stop the approach with a long Penetrating Front Kick and follow up with groin and knee destructions



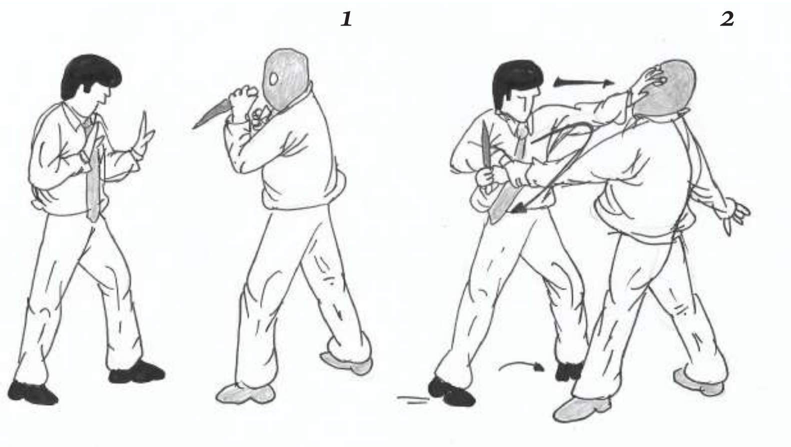
The coming Figures will now illustrate that a Front Kick or any other Stop Kick, can be followed by other techniques than simply kicks or eye strikes. In our example, a threatening attacker approaches and expects you to frightfully wait for him. But a successful **Groin Front Stop Kick** will stop him and place him at the mercy of a Double Ear Slap to catch his head and take him down with a vigorous Neck Twist. Bang his head on the ground and maintain it there for further strikes, uninterrupted of course.



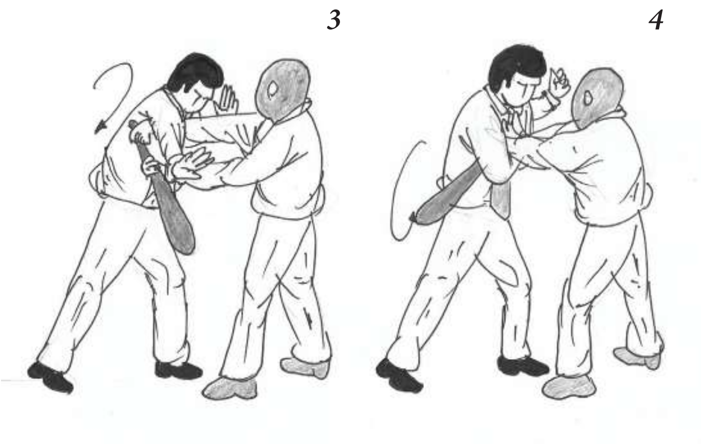
A Groin Front Stop Kick will have your would-be assailant crouch down in pain and offer himself for a hard Neck Twisting Takedow

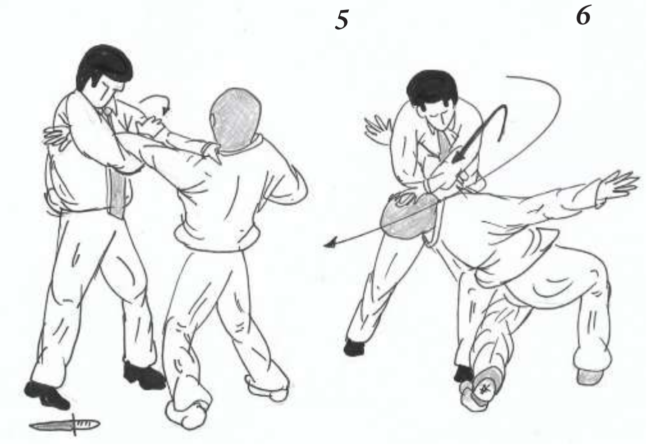


Our last set of Drawings presents a maneuver related to the 'Range Covering' section. We present it here last because it is *a sophisticated Disarming Technique for advanced Kravists only*. The first part is a regular diving forward and getting control of the opponent's armed wrist. But the rest of the technique is more sophisticated and relevant to an attacker holding the knife up in an icepick grip. It is to be drilled *only* after you have mastered all other Knife Defenses, with kicks and strikes.
In our example, you dive forward to catch the opponent's wrist from the inside while poking his eyes. Use the eye pain to twist his wrist and bring the knife blade up. It is now easy, if you are well-trained, to push away the blade with your forearm. If you do this while twisting his wrist further, you will cause his fingers to open and the knife to fall down. To make sure you can do this disarming maneuver, you have used your eye-poking hand to strike and then grab & squeeze his throat. As soon as he starts releasing the knife, you encircle his arm and grab your throat-squeezing arm in a Figure-Four Lock. Now, remember that Locks in *Krav Maga* are transitions and joint damagers. Use your body and arms to brusquely hurt his elbow joint and then to take him down. Help the Takedown with your fingers (previously at his throat) into his eyes. When he is on the floor, you could stomp his ankle to neutralize him, and kick the knife away.



Preemptive 'covering-the-gap' technique that includes sophisticated disarming and joint-locking techniques



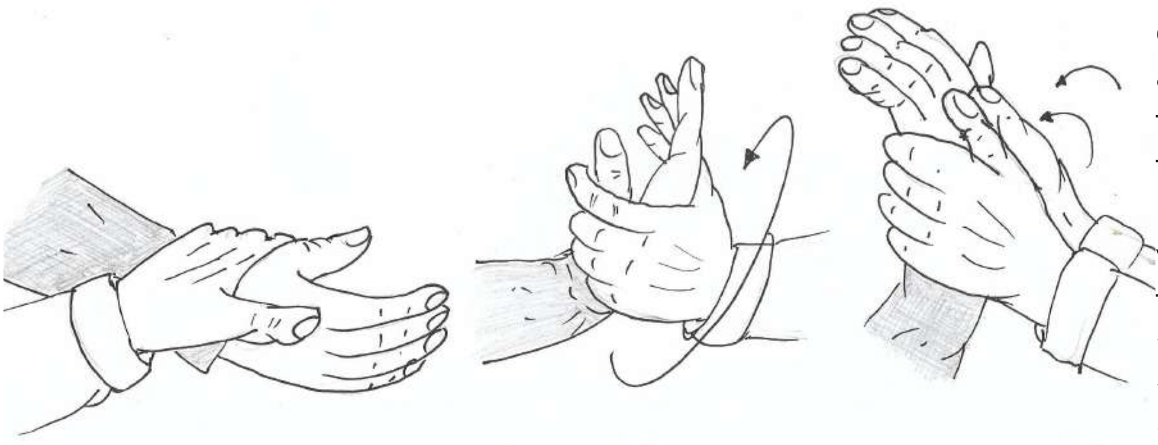


8.6 Disarming Principles

Disarming techniques should *not* be attempted before the trainee has fully mastered the 'Striking' Knife Defenses. Locks and Disarmaments are sophisticated techniques that require a good understanding of fighting dynamics and a lot of training. Fighting with an opponent to set a Lock or to take away his knife is not something you want to get in. You have to stun him first and then damage his joints or take his knife, because you then can.

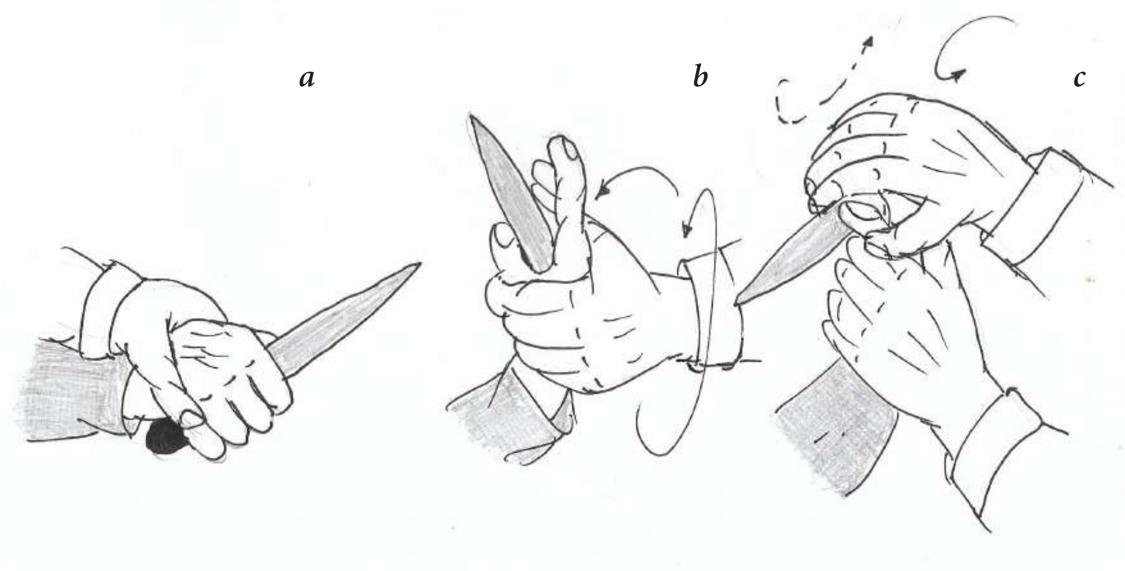
The principle of **Knife Disarming** is pretty simple, but it is easy to forget that it is much more difficult to do in real life than with a partner, even a resisting one. Your opponent will put everything he has into not-relinquishing his weapon.

So, once you feel advanced enough you should start to familiarize yourself with the basic Wrist lock that allows disarmament. The basic version is presented below, and the Drawings are clear. Drill this gradually faster and mark both the twist and the downward push. In real life, you will have to twist and push *violently* and *with the help of your whole body*, not only your arms.

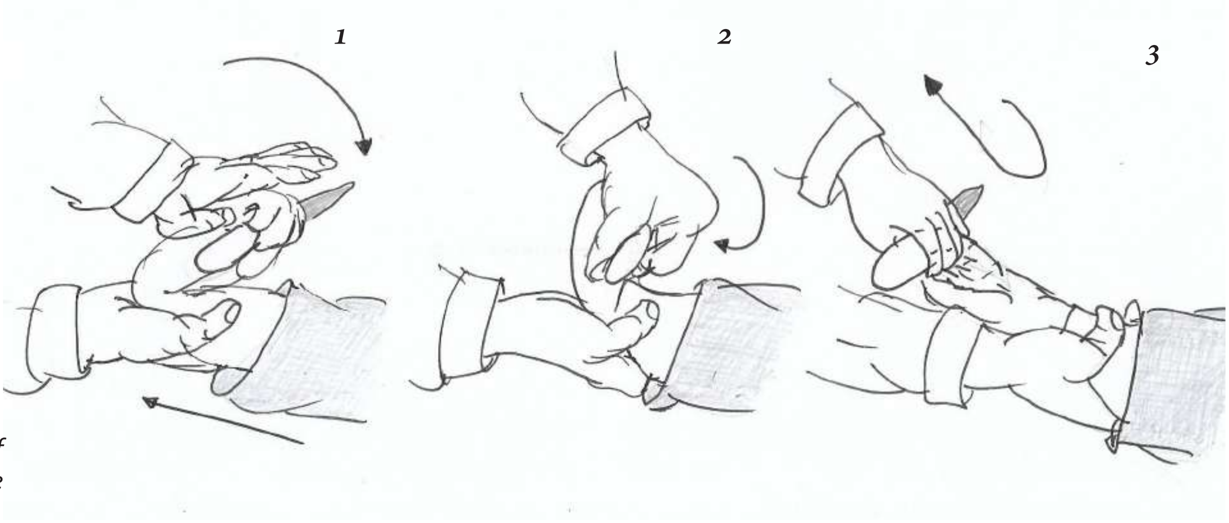


The basic Wrist Lock

Now you will notice that this Wrist Lock has the additional effect *to cause a straightening of the fingers*; this will be the **disarming** feature. Once you have mastered the setting of the basic Wrist Lock, you should start practicing with a partner holding the knife. Once in position, you can use the second hand to push the fingers down. From there it will be very easy to 'peel' the knife-handle out of his hand. Practice carefully, but remember that in real life you **twist brusquely and strike down** rather that pushing gently down.



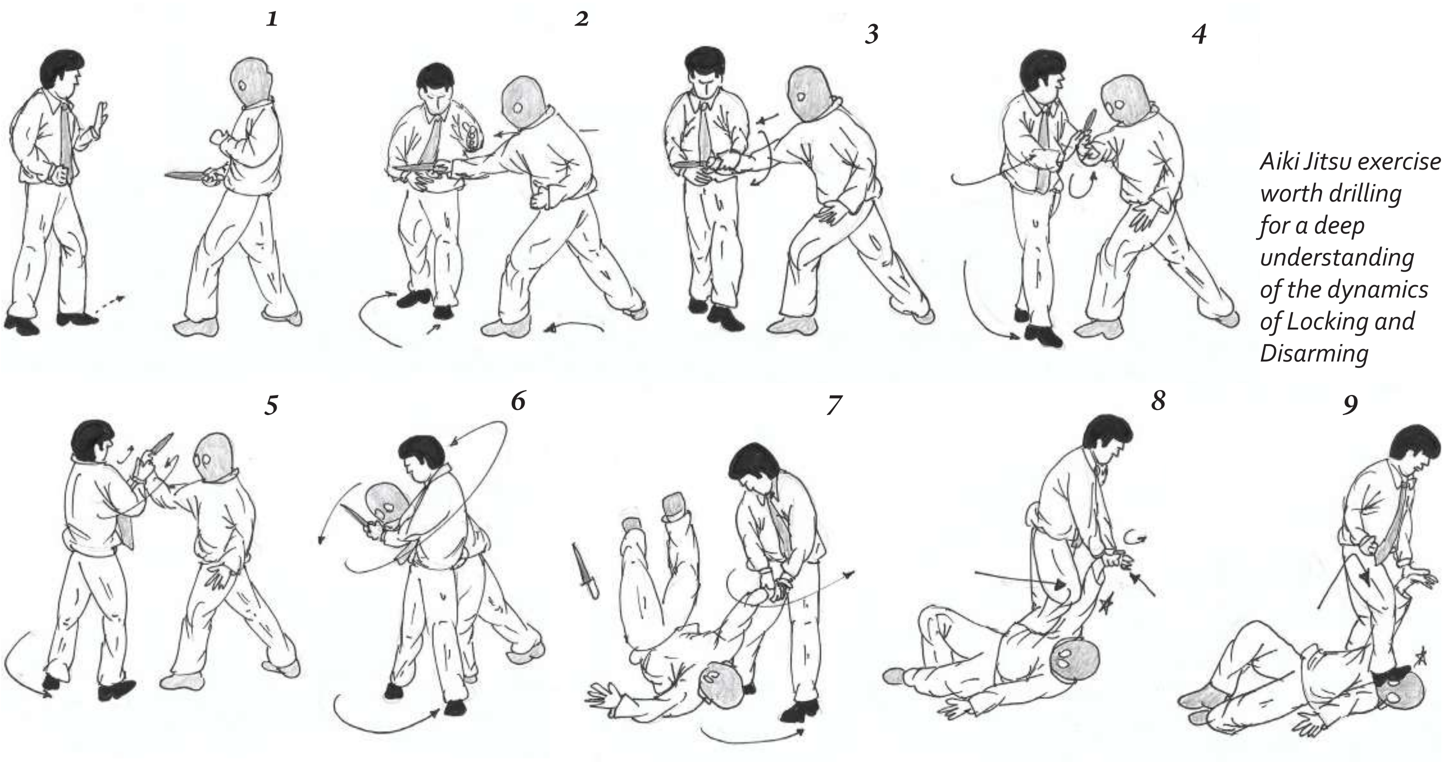
Drill the Wrist Lock with a knife and peel it out of his weakened grip



The peeling off of the knife

To conclude this section, we shall present a classic *Aiki Jitsu* series to drill in order to understand the principles behind these kind of wristlock maneuvers. It also teaches you evasion principles and the use of the whole body in order to set Locks. This is an important exercise, but it is not *Krav Maga*. Drill it regularly until you 'feel' the natural setting of a Wrist Lock, then have your partner resist more and more. It will help you much in your further progress with Disarming and Locking techniques.

The Figures at the top of next page show clearly how to evade-out a body stab, get control of the stabbing wrist and set up the Lock. You pass in front of him to use your body to set up the Lock without blocking the general forward momentum of the attacker. You keep your twisting motion and push down to take him down while causing the release of the knife. If you keep twisting, he will fall on his back besides you, and you will be able to kick his extended elbow and stomp his face.



Aiki Jitsu exercise worth drilling for a deep understanding of the dynamics of Locking and Disarming

8.7 Close proximity Knife Threats

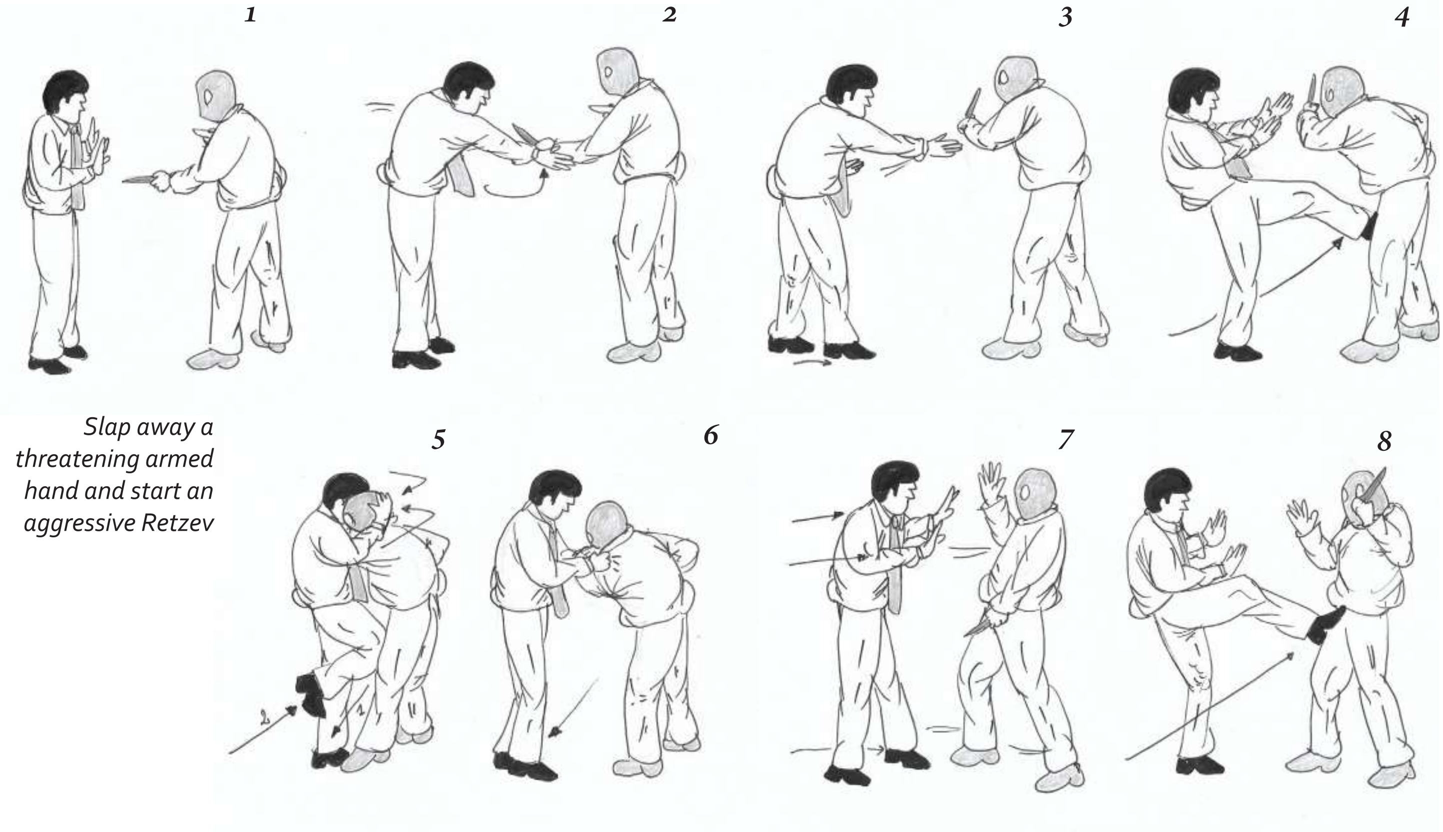
The good news is that a threatening opponent wants something for you and is not attacking you (yet). The bad news is that he is probably already too close. You therefore have to react explosively and aggressively *as soon as possible*, before he decides to attack himself. It can be productive to first look as if you will be caving to his demands, even pointing to your wallet pocket; and then **explode**.

8.7.1 Close but non-touching knife threats

The assailant is close *but there is no contact of the knife blade with your body*. He is threatening you or making demands while brandishing his knife forward. Lift your hands in a non-threatening submissive way; that allows you to defuse the situation while getting out of inertia. Explode in a powerful slap to his armed wrist in order to throw it to his in-side. Immediately **kick his groin**...

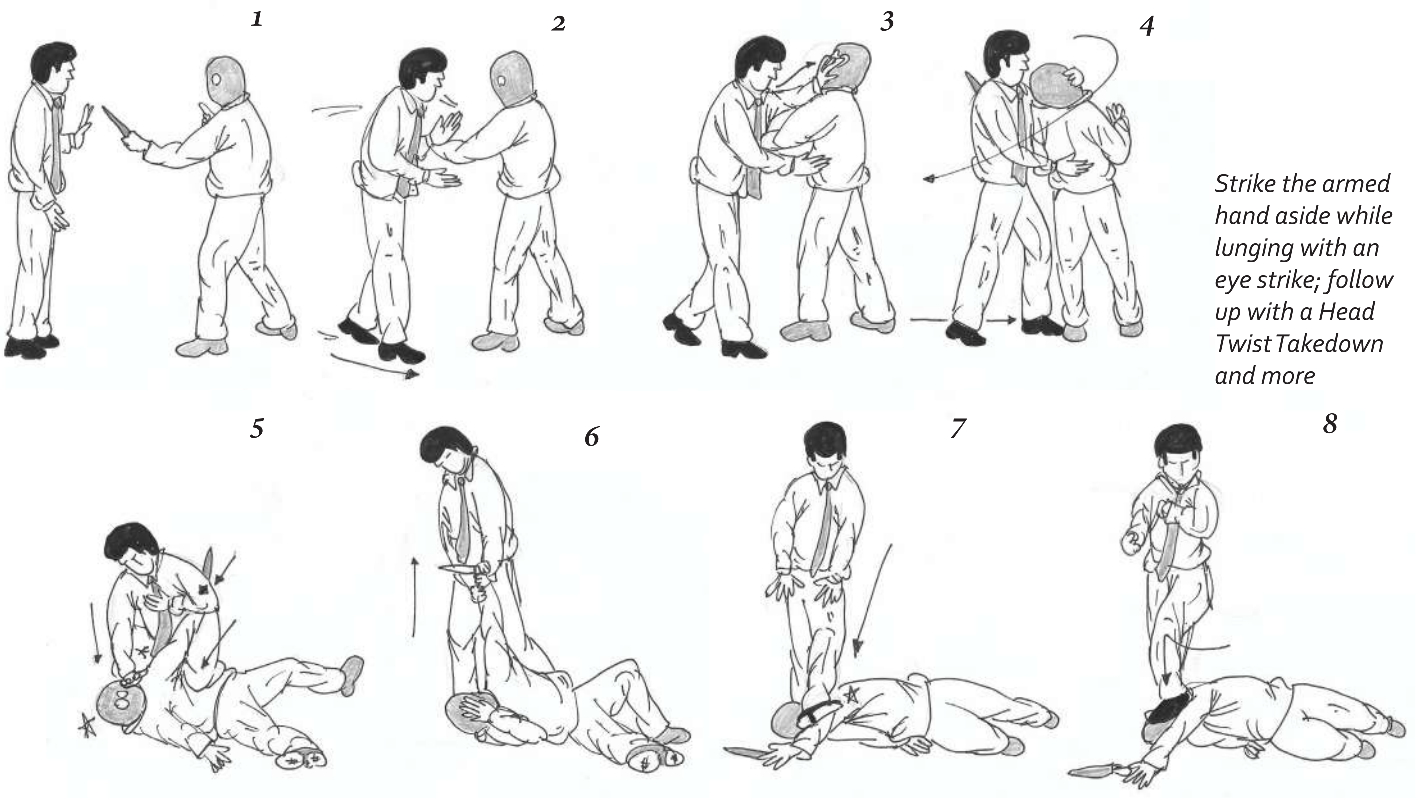
➔

… The slap removes the knife from the dangerous central axis and places him in a position that prevents the use of his other arm as well. Lower your kicking leg and get close to him to knee his groin with the other leg while slapping his ears and grab his head. His armed arm is still neutralized between your two bodies. Grab his shoulder and arm in its position and push him violently away. Go after him with a powerful long Penetrating Front Kick (hopping if necessary) as he stumbles backwards. From there you should either pursue him with kicks, or you should turn around to run away.



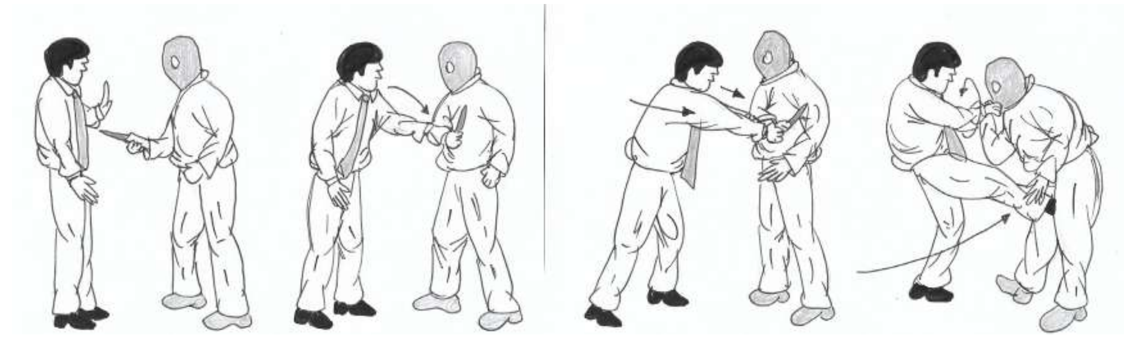
Slap away a threatening armed hand and start an aggressive Retzev

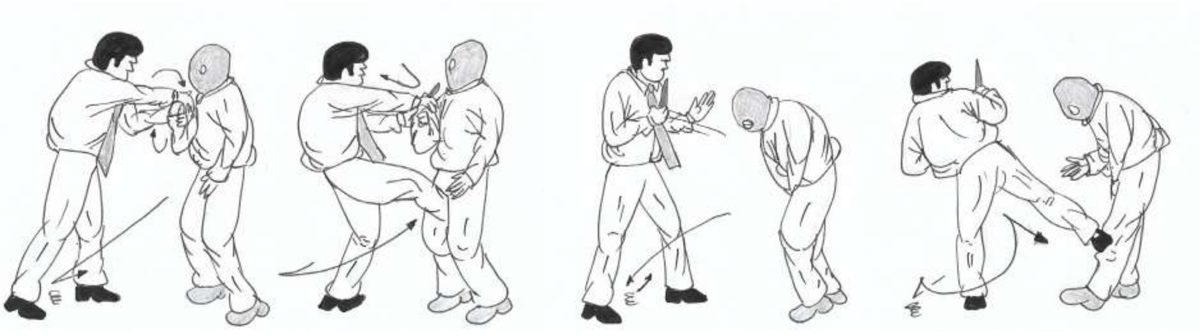
If the assailant is **closer** than in the previous example, you have to react before he can approach further. The Drawings at the top of next page illustrate how to **lunge forward** and out while striking the armed forearm to the attacker's in-side. Keep going forward, so as to make the use of his knife irrelevant and strike his eyes with the blocking hand. You keep on your forward momentum and twist his head (with your fingers in eyes for better control) all the way down. You keep control of his armed arm under your armpit while slamming his head on the floor and then immediately stand up while grabbing his wrist with both hands. You can then stomp-kick his extended elbow all the way to the floor. Crush the elbow *into* the floor and stomp his head to conclude. *The starting forward lunge is the key to the success of this series*.



Strike the armed hand aside while lunging with an eye strike; follow up with a Head Twist Takedown and more

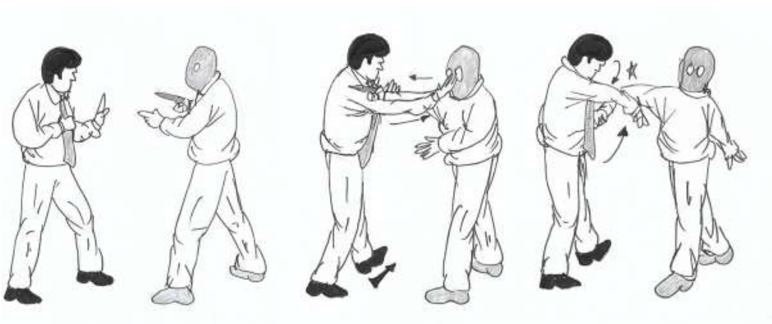
If the assailant is even **closer** than in the previous example, and is still approaching, you have to react before the blade can come into threatening contact with your body. Immediately grab and push his armed wrist from the outside; explode into the move and push with all your body weight. Immediately add your second hand to the push and force his hand onto his own belly. While he concentrates to resist the move, you kick his groin. Use the pain and surprise to take his armed hand into classic Wrist Lock position, and repeat the Groin Kick. You should now be able to disarm him as described earlier. In any case, pull away, with the knife or without. *Do not ever get into a tug-of-war about the possession of the weapon*. As soon as you are away, come back with a Body-bent Side Kick through his knee. Keep kicking.

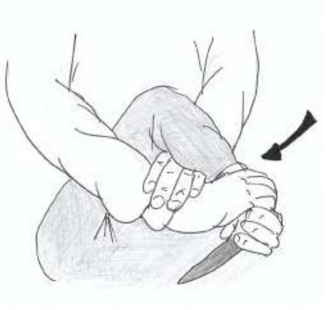


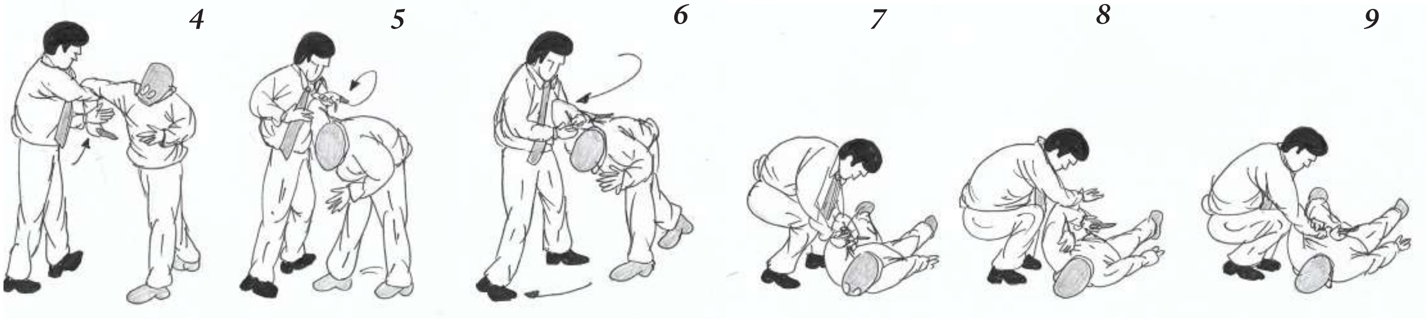


Grab the threatening hand and push it with all your body towards the opponent's trunk; start kicking

We shall now present an **Armlock Disarming defense** against a more dangerous threatening attack, in which your assailant uses little stabs towards your face to intimidate you and submit you to his will. Block one of the stabs while going *forward and out* and simultaneously attack his eyes from the inside. This is classical *Krav Maga*, but it needs serious drilling. Grab his armed wrist and strike his inside elbow to bend his arm. You can now release his wrist to place him into the Armlock. Remember that armlocks in *Krav Maga* are about joint damage: pull him forward while twisting *violently* to damage both shoulder and elbow. You can now easily pull him to the ground. Change your hold to the Figure Four Armlock illustrated and set it *violently* to disarm the attacker.

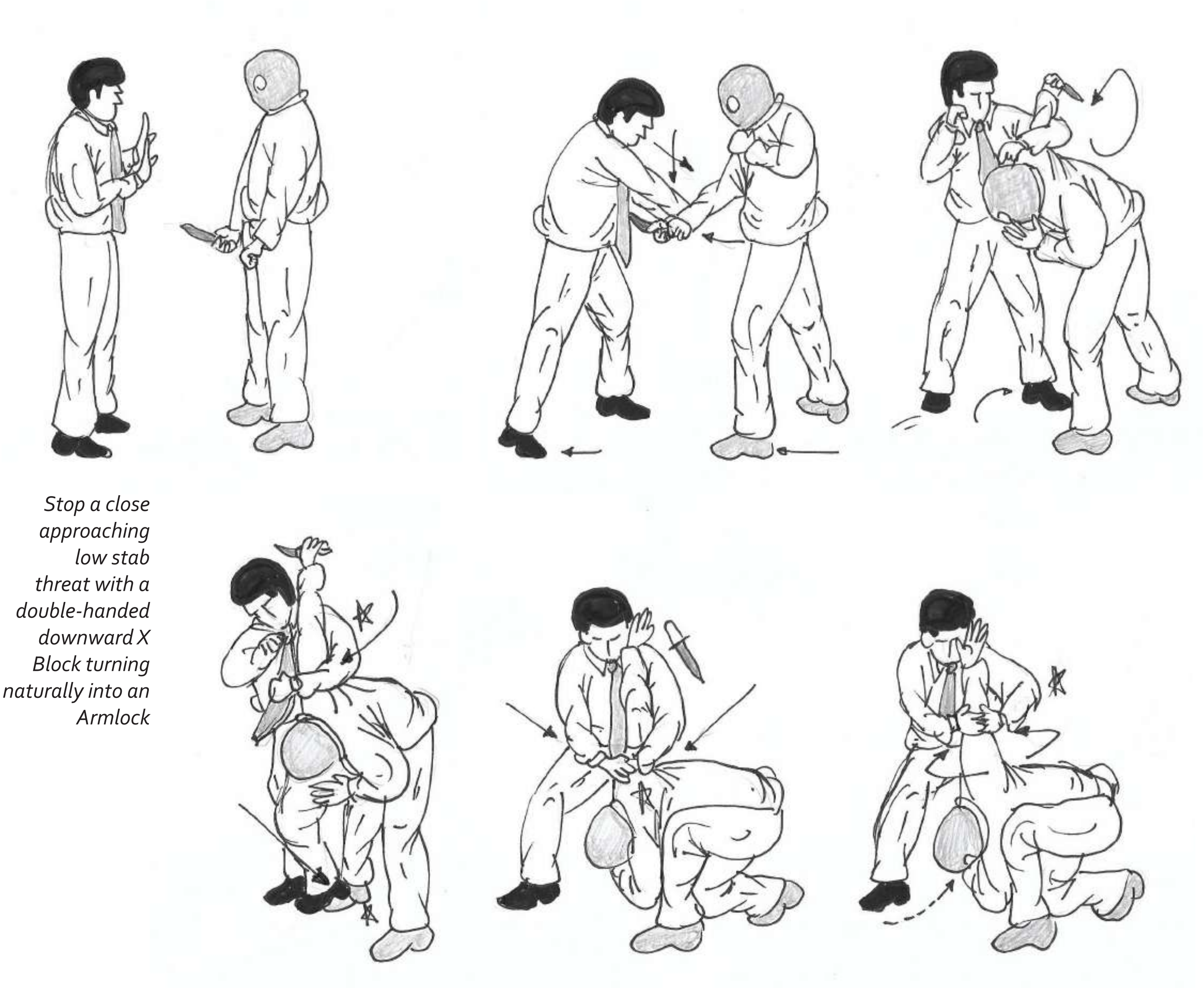






Block/Evade/Counter a threatening stab, attack the eyes and start a sophisticated and joint destroying defense

We shall conclude this section with an **Armlock defense** against a low knife threat from very close. Holding the knife hidden on his side will allow your assailant to get close without showing his weapon. The subsequent strike or threatening hold will be an upward low stab, which is a very dangerous eviscerating attack. As soon as you see the low knife holding, you must react to avoid it getting in contact with your body. Attack the armed wrist with a classic *Downward X Block* and start the Armlock set up. You are surging forward with power! Set the Armlock by twisting *violently* to cause harm; this is not about control. Stomp his toes and shake him by lowering yourself with a shock to his locked shoulder. Then strike his extended elbow with both hands for elbow damage. You can follow up with an Upward Front Kick to his face as the start of your *Retzev*. See Illustrations at the top of next page.



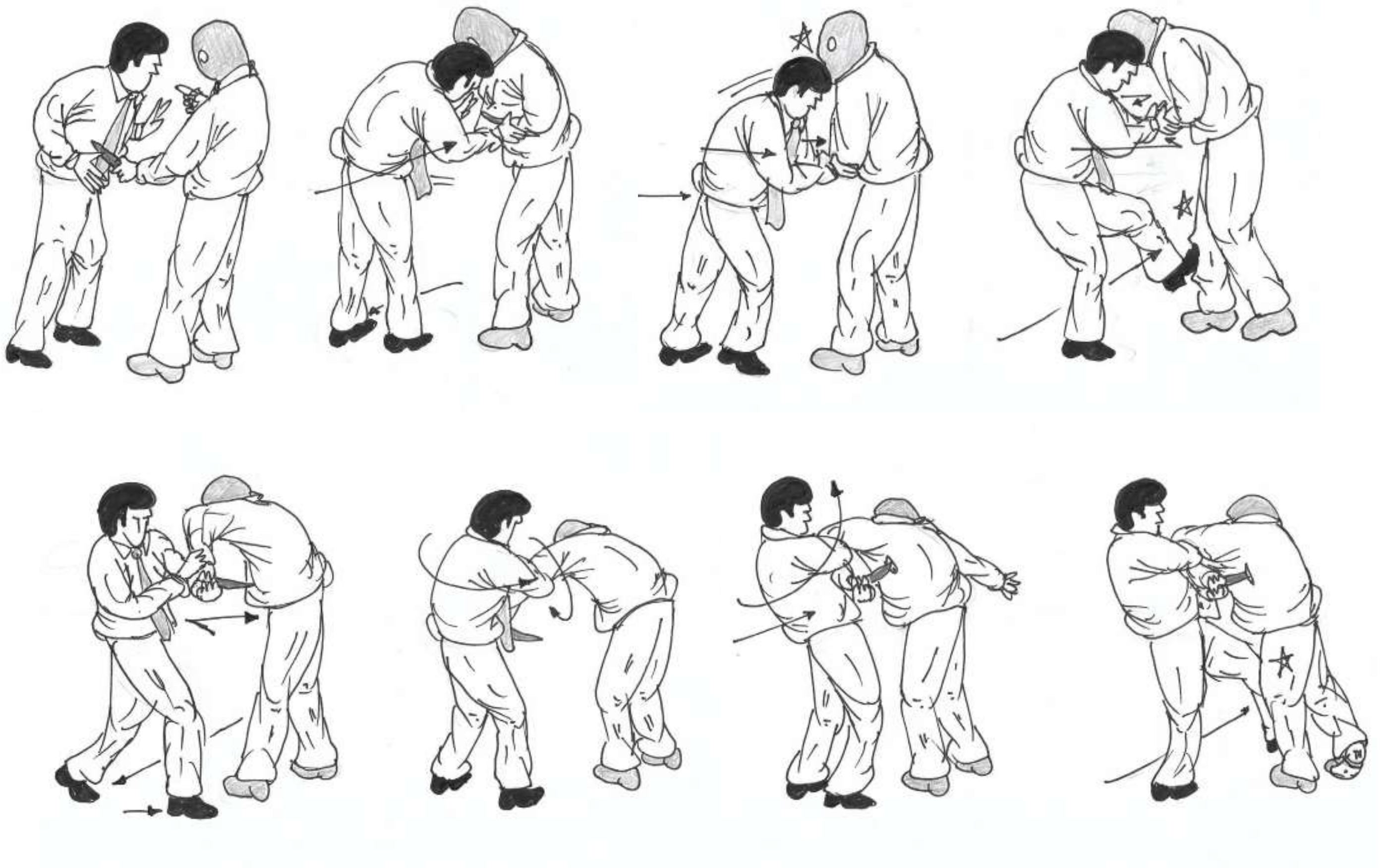
Stop a close approaching low stab threat with a double-handed downward X Block turning naturally into an Armlock

8.7.2 Front threats with blade contact

In theory, blade contact makes a potential strike less powerful. But remember that the opponent can push with all his body and a sharp knife will cut or penetrate easily. The good news is that a *threat* is not an attack: the assailant wants something and gives you time to react. Do it fast and viciously.

➤

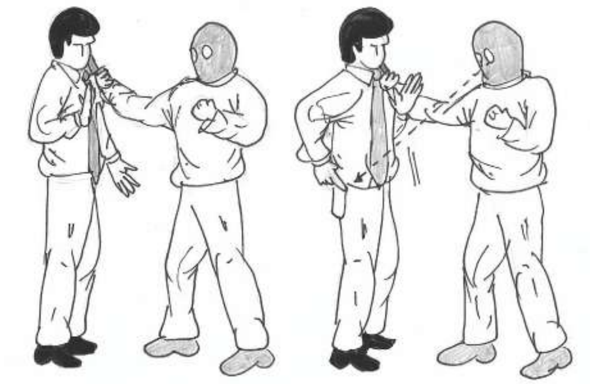
The first set of Illustrations shows a "**use his own knife against him**" technique against a knife-on-the-belly threat. Pull your belly back while slapping and pushing his armed hand towards his own body, with all your (body) power. Keep the momentum and headbutt his face while your second hand comes to help control his armed wrist pushed to his own belly. Kick his shin or knee forcefully, and then suddenly invert your momentum while pulling the kicking leg back. You have pushed with all your might, and suddenly you go with his instinctive resistance and pull him forcefully while extending his arm. He will again naturally react to counter your pull, and you can then go back to pushing while bending his arm and setting up the hold that will allow to stab him with his own knife. Use the power of your hips to push the knife towards his ribs and you can then knee his groin to lower his resistance and push it further.



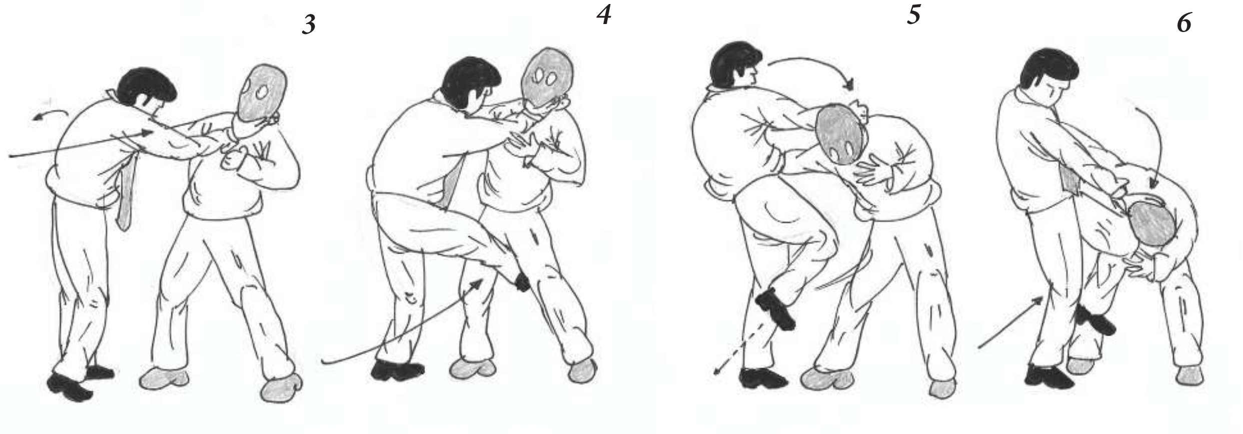
Glue his armed wrist to his body with all you have and headbutt him to allow for the set-up of the stabbing defense; use his natural reactions to push and pull to keep him off-balance

A more dangerous front threat is **blade contact with your throat**. A sharp knife can go through that area like butter and you are in clear and present danger. Make sure the assailant believes that you are wielding to all his demands; if you can divert his attention just before exploding into the technique, go for it.

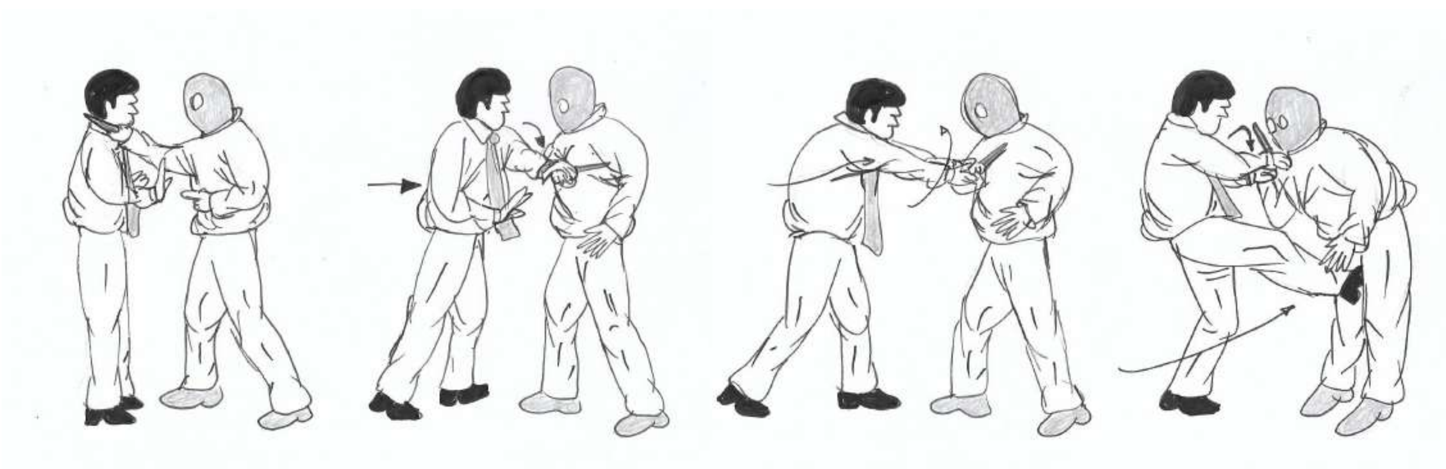
In the **first** set of Drawings, you can see how to remove the knife on your carotid by striking inside out (and grabbing the wrist). Nearly simultaneously, you are striking his throat that you will further pinch [*You could also strike the eyes and then go down to grab the throat*]. Kick his groin with everything you have and strike his neck as he bends in pain. Pull his head down into a knee strike from the other leg. All the while, you have kept hold of his armed wrist. From here, you can keep striking or you can push him away and run…



Remove the threat with a block and grab and start hitting

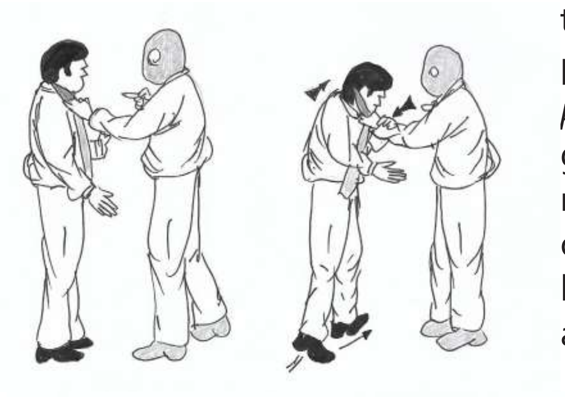


If the aggressor holds his knife **across your throat**, the situation is more difficult and dangerous. As illustrated, you'll have to push his hand to his body with an *explosive* forward momentum (move the head back and sideways of course and push diagonally). Keep the forward momentum and grab the armed with both hands. Kick his groin in order to help set up the classic Wrist Lock position. Start a *Retzev* from there.

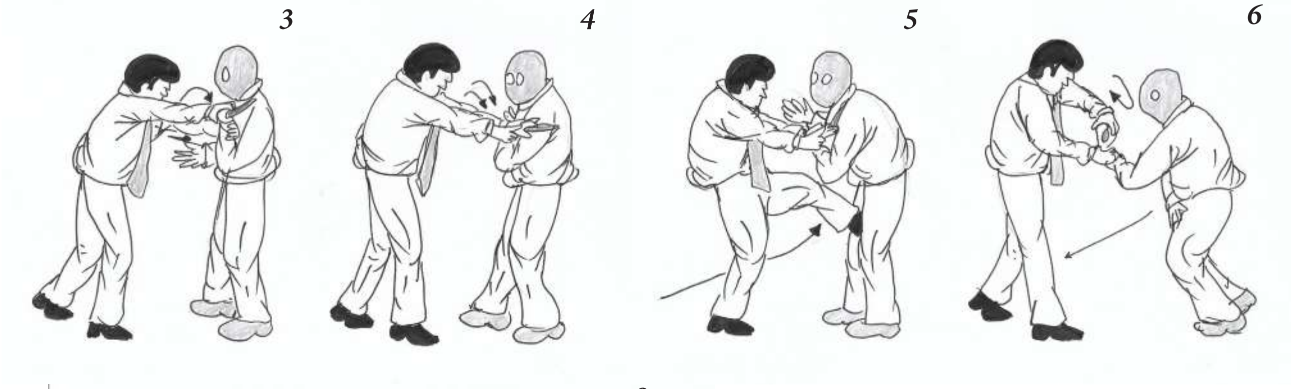


Push the threatening hand to the assailant's chest, kick his groin and follow up

The next example will illustrate clearly the **classic Wrist Lock to disarming sequence**, of course after a well-deserved groin kick. The knife threat is a straight carotid hold, but the slap/grab move is different than in the previous handling of this threat. The '*slap and grab*' comes from the *same side* hand and slaps the armed wrist *inside out*. At the same time, you go forward diagonally away from the threat but towards him. Grab the wrist with your other hand in the Wrist Lock position and then adjust the other hand for the classic hold. This will only be possible if you are pushing aggressively forward and *if you use your body power* to get into position. As he concentrates on his grabbed wrist, kick his groin with all you have. You can now push his hand in Wrist Lock and peel the knife out of his straightening fingers. And now is the time to kick him again in the groin or in the floating ribs. Keep at it.

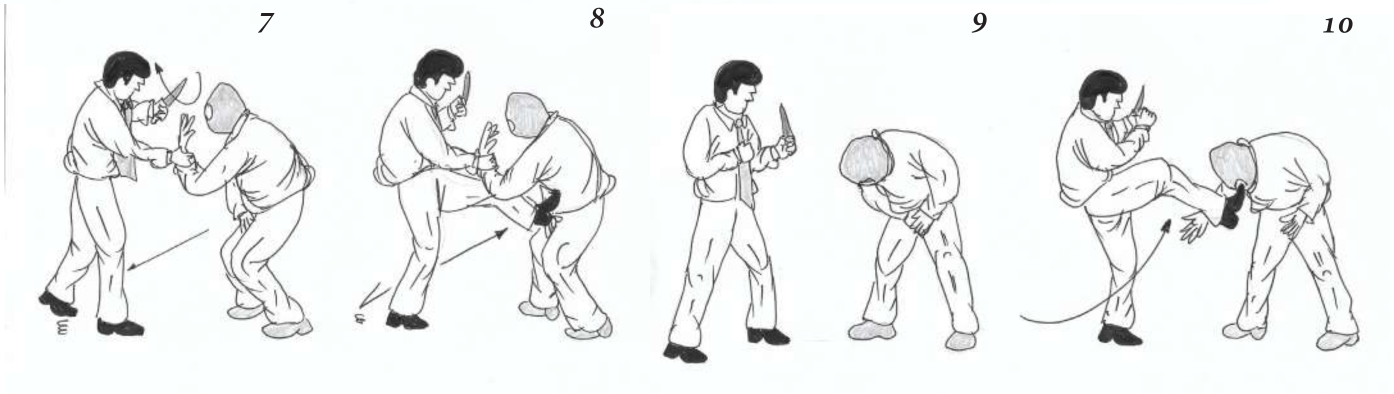


3 4 5 6



Slap and grab the threatening wrist, go forward with the wrist-lock set-up, kick and disarm

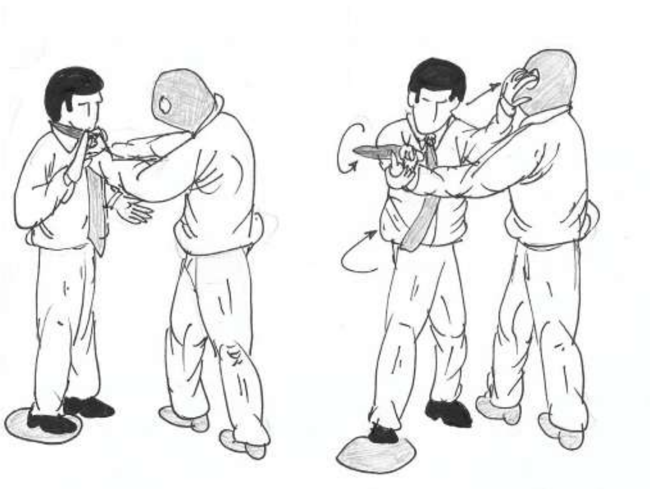
7 8 9 10

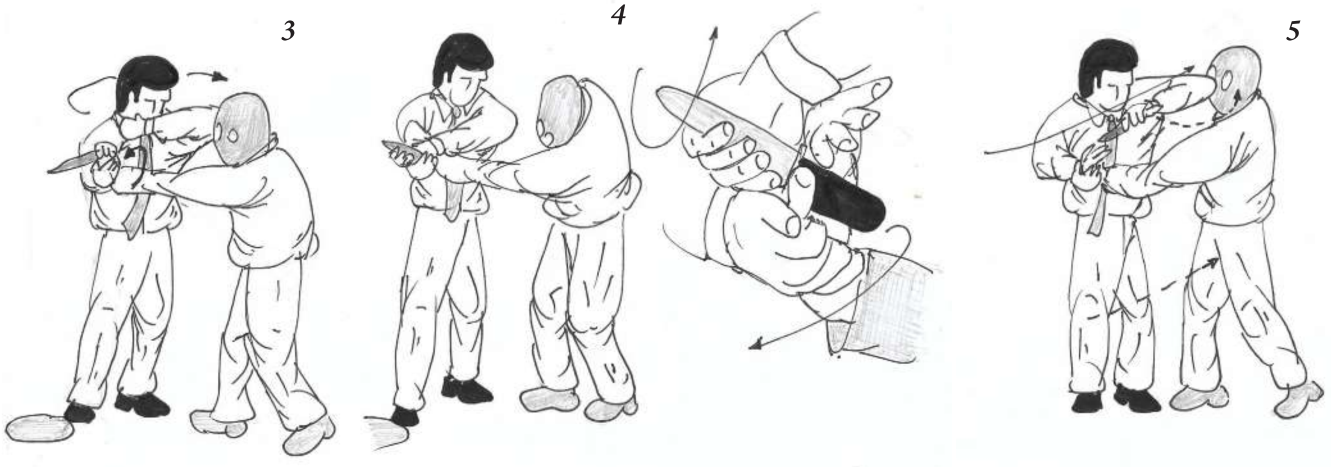


The next example is a more advanced technique with a **sophisticated Disarm**. Do not start drilling it before you have mastered the basic techniques. The reaction to a *straight carotid threat* is based on a simultaneous triple move: you move the upper body away from the knife, you strike his eyes and you grab and twist his armed hand (into wrist lock position)...

➡

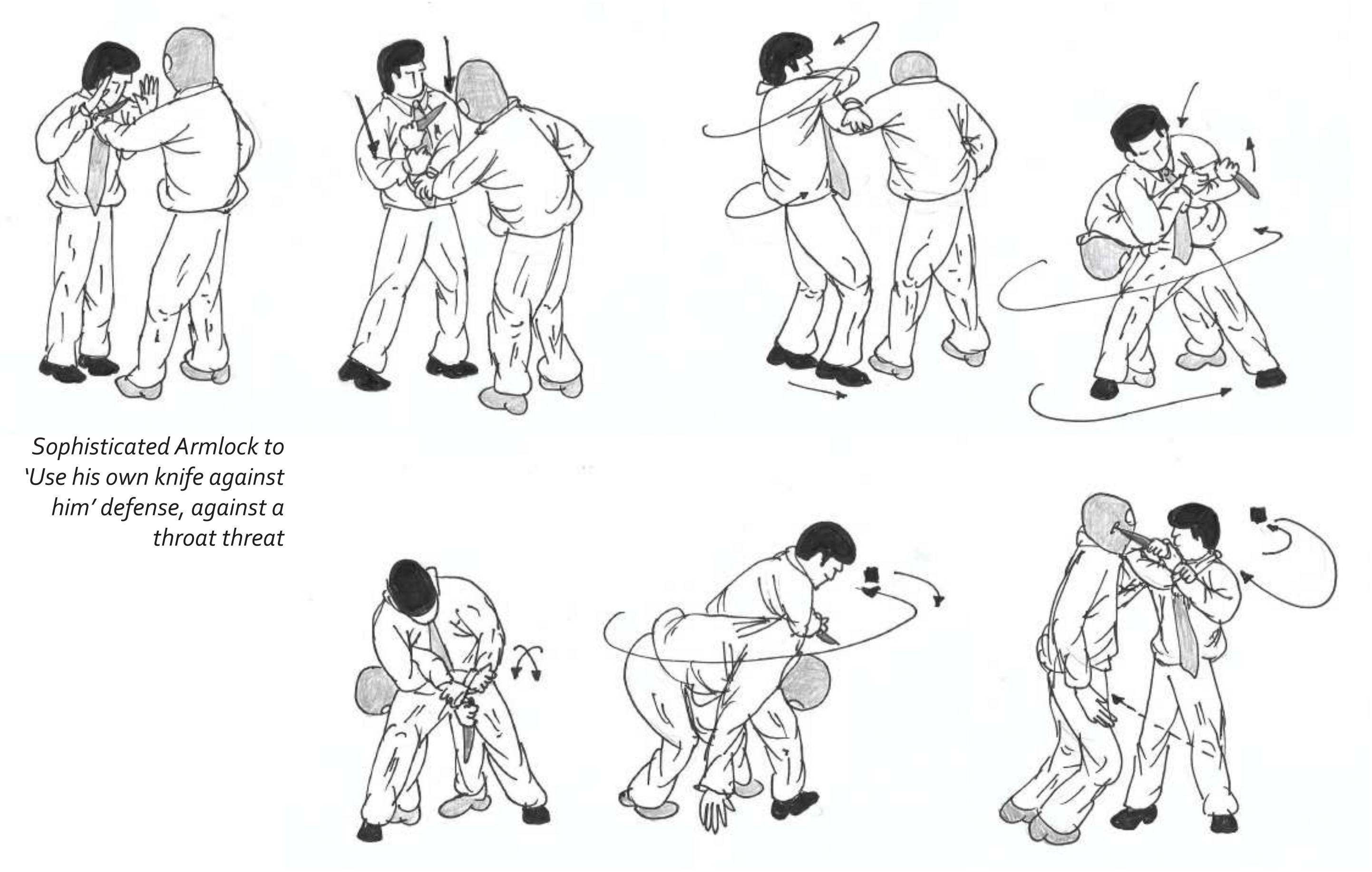
…It is more difficult than it looks. The moves must be nearly simultaneous, and the ability to twist his armed wrist with one hand is highly dependent on the success of the eye poke. With serious drilling it becomes a very fast and effective maneuver. Your eye strike becomes an Elbow Strike as you come closer forward, and the hand comes to disarm by grabbing the blade itself out of the opponent's wrist-locked fingers (See Illustrations below). Again, a maneuver that requires training. You can use the return of the arm to elbow his head again and start your *Retzev*.





A difficult and sophisticated Disarm defense, but that is worth drilling

We shall conclude this section with another sophisticated defense including **Armlocks and 'use his own knife against him'.** The knife threat is straight but across the throat. Lean forward while trying to talk your way out of it and lift your hands in clear surrender. You will then strike his forearm down with *all your power* while pulling your neck back. You should use your body weight and aim at striking close to the wrist and close to the elbow in order to bend his arm as well. Press his arm to your body with both hands and use your hips and trunk to keep him under control. Twist violently for a full 360 pivot that will place his armed arm in Armlock under your armpit. Remember that the purpose is to inflict joint damage: you should act *brusquely*. As soon as you have damaged his elbow, change your hold into a classic Figure-Four Lock. Do another violent half-circle pivot to place him off-balance, and then suddenly change the direction of the circular move. By doing so, you release his arm from under your armpit so you can push his knife into his face with the force of both your arms and of his own reaction to the circular pull.



Sophisticated Armlock to 'Use his own knife against him' defense, against a throat threat

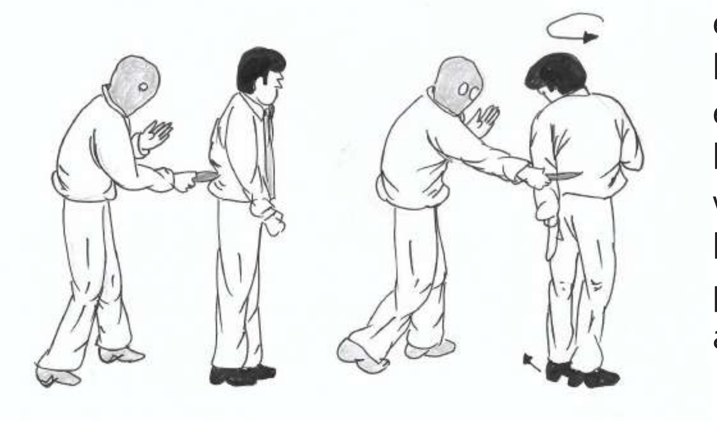
8.7.3 Back threats with blade contact

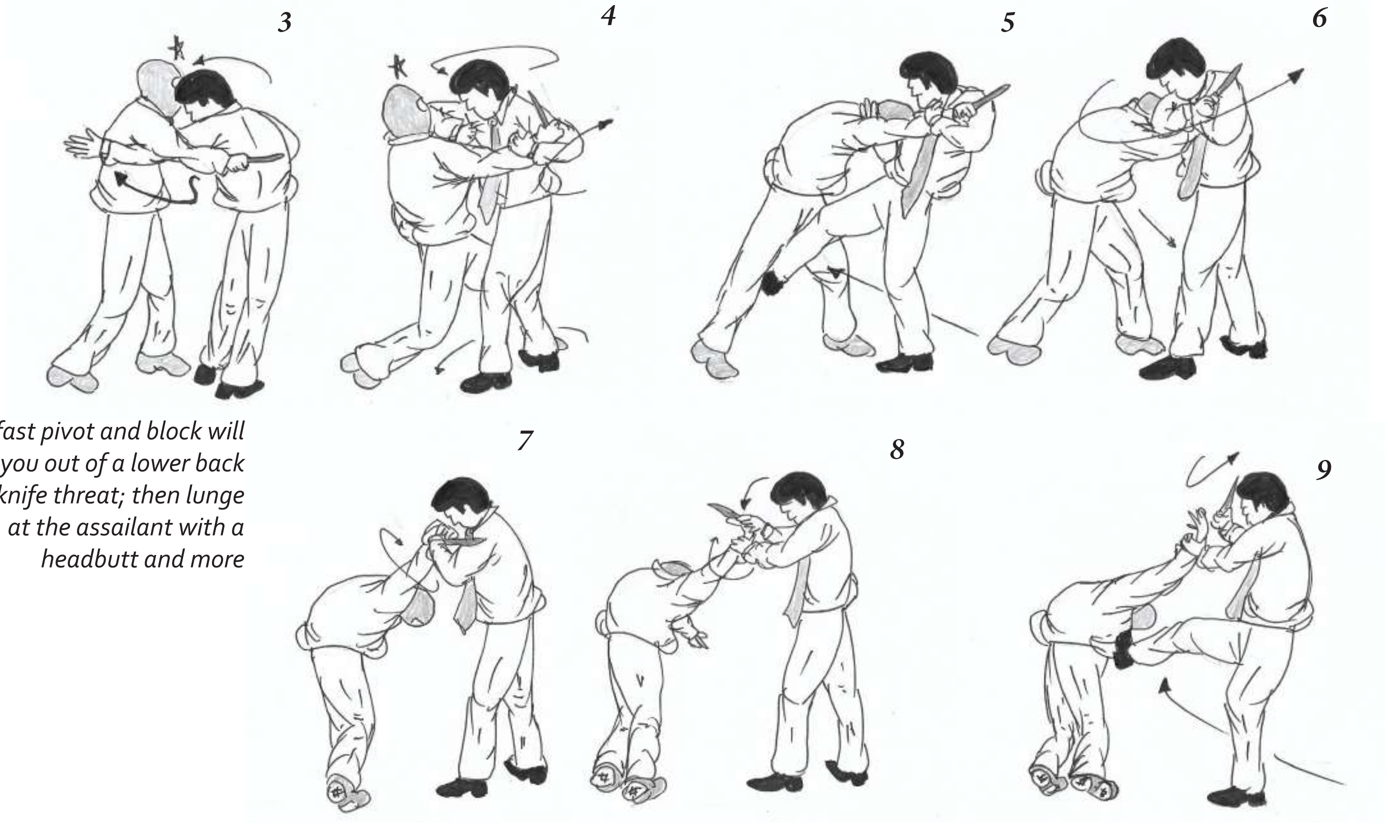
Being threatened in your back puts you, on top of everything, at a psychological and tactical disadvantage. If relevant, make sure you lower your opponent's guard by agreeing to all his demands and appear totally cowered ... before exploding into action. The most common back threat, and the easiest to deal with, is the Hollywood-like stab contact to your lower back. If you drill the defense below, you will fast realize that getting out of the threat is pretty easy, because fast and natural [I*t is, by the way, the same for a gun threat with back contact]*. To convince yourself, you can try with a partner who is to push the (fake) knife in as soon as you start your defense: you'll see.

Do not lift your hands but pivot in place with the shoulders. This is the key move that will remove your back from contact while allowing for your arm do deviate the knife wrist. You should start with the pivot, but nearly simultaneously, also move slightly sideways...

➡

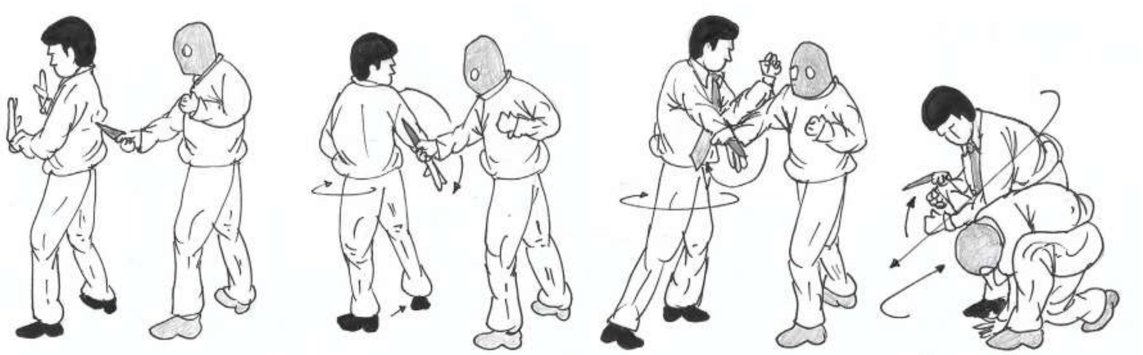
...As soon as your back is out of danger, you should lunge towards the aggressor while extending your arm below his. Headbutt him with your momentum and use the energy of the pivot to elbow the side of his head. Get control of his armed wrist while you pull his shoulder towards you and kick his groin. Grab his wrist in Wrist Lock position with your other hand, disarm him and keep kicking





A fast pivot and block will get you out of a lower back knife threat; then lunge at the assailant with a headbutt and more

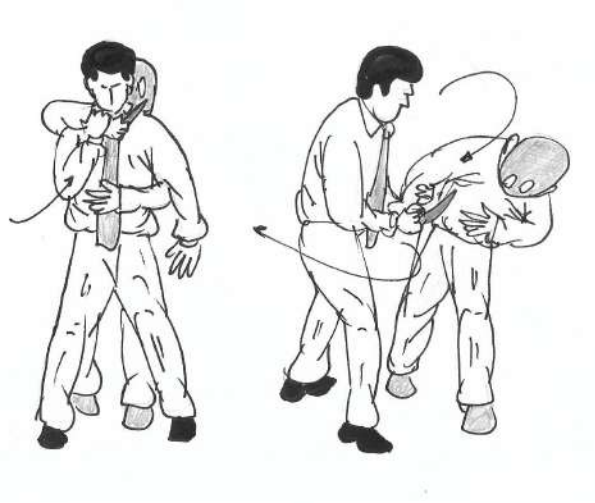
The next set of Drawings shows another way to go after the same simple and effective pivot: strike his extended elbow and go into violent simple Arm Lock. Start hammering from there.



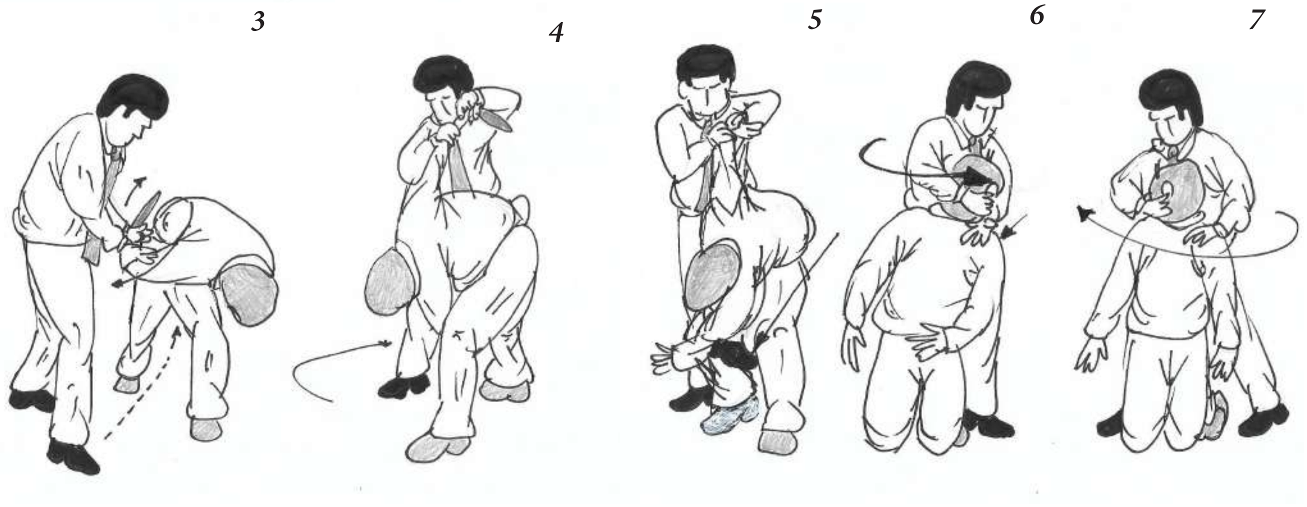
Simple Armlock maneuver after the simple pivot defense

A much more difficult situation to get out from is the **throat threat from behind**. Remember that a sharp knife can easily cut through the throat cartilage or the muscles around the arteries. The idea will *always* be to first grab and lower the armed wrist to get the neck out of danger.

The **first** example illustrated below shows how to grab and lower the threatening knife. Hit his groin with your bottom as you bend to pass under the armed arm. Get a double hold on his arm to place him in Armlock position. Kick his face, lift his arm and get behind him while wrist-locking him into releasing the knife. Stomp the back of his knee and catch his chin for a violent head twist.



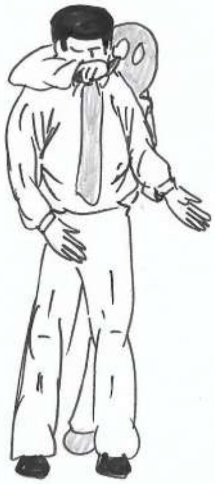
A defense that needs serious drilling, based on Locks



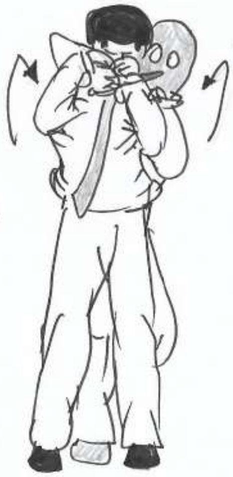
The next series of Figures, at the top of next page, illustrates how you grab the threatening arm **with both hands and use all your body weight and power to pass under the arm**. Keep using all your body to thrust the knife towards and into the aggressor’s side. Get behind him and stomp the back of his knee into the ground. Keep control of his shoulder and eye area. Keep at it if necessary…

➔

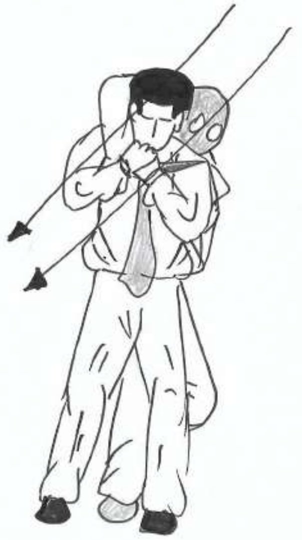
1



2

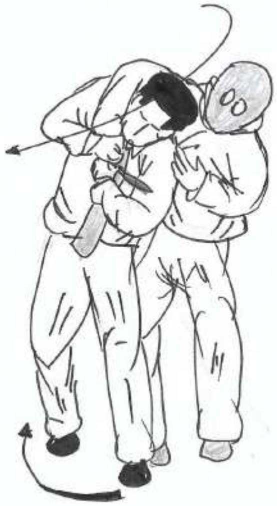


3

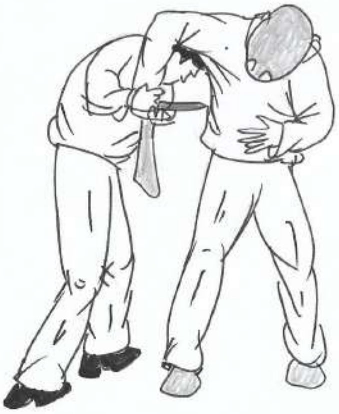


Use both hands and body weight to neutralize the threat and pass under his arm for a 'use his own knife against him' defense

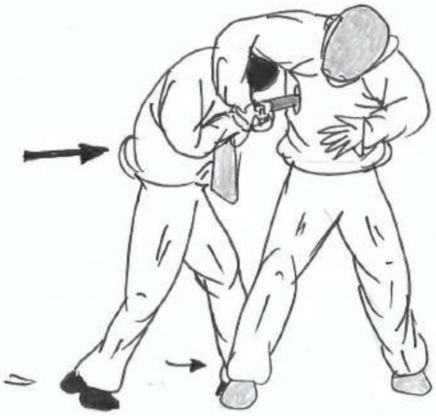
4



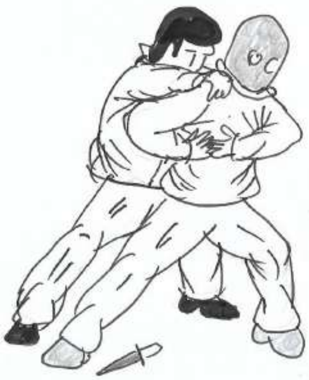
5



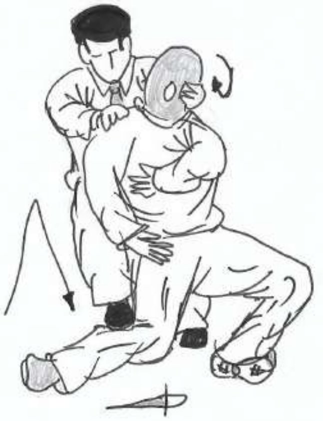
6



7



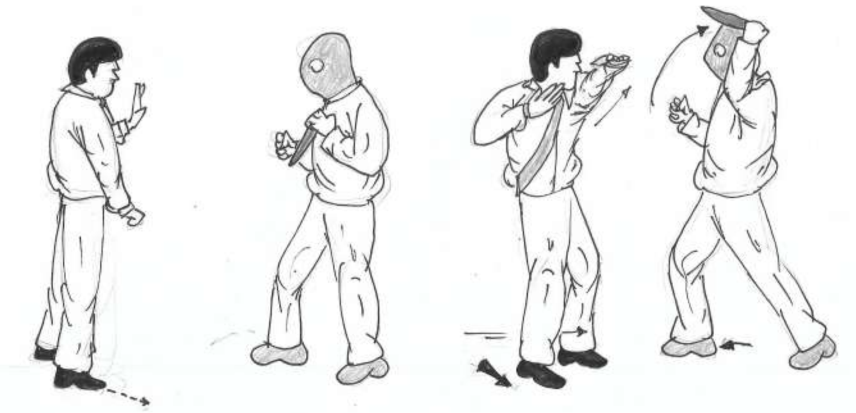
8

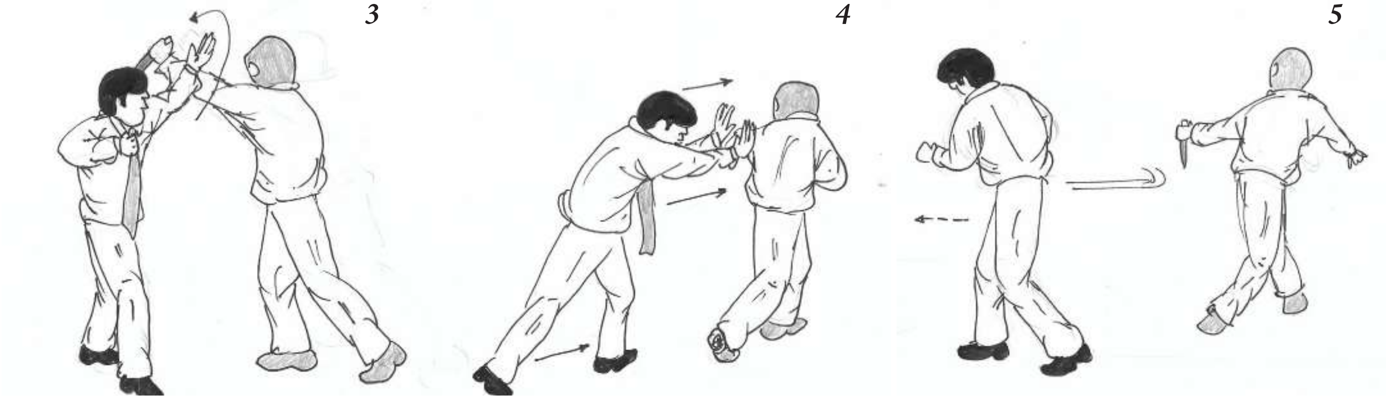


8.8 Downward 'Icepick' Knife Attacks

The **Downward Icepick Knife Strike** is probably the most common 'true' attack. It is not a threat, but a life-threatening move with no other purpose than kill or seriously wound. It will be the attack of an assailant in crazed state or of a terrorist, not of anyone trying to scare you into giving up your wallet. It is extremely dangerous because of the power it entails and the fact that nearly anything pierced from that angle is potentially lethal. The good news is that the attack requires a very clear chambering that makes it easy to identify early and to intercept on its way down. The *Krav Maga* handling will always to go diagonally forward to neutralize the strike by being closer than expected, earlier than expected and more sideways than expected. The Strike being powerful and needing a clear chambering, it will therefore be difficult for the aggressor to change his trajectory in mid-course. Once you are close and in control, many possibilities arise.

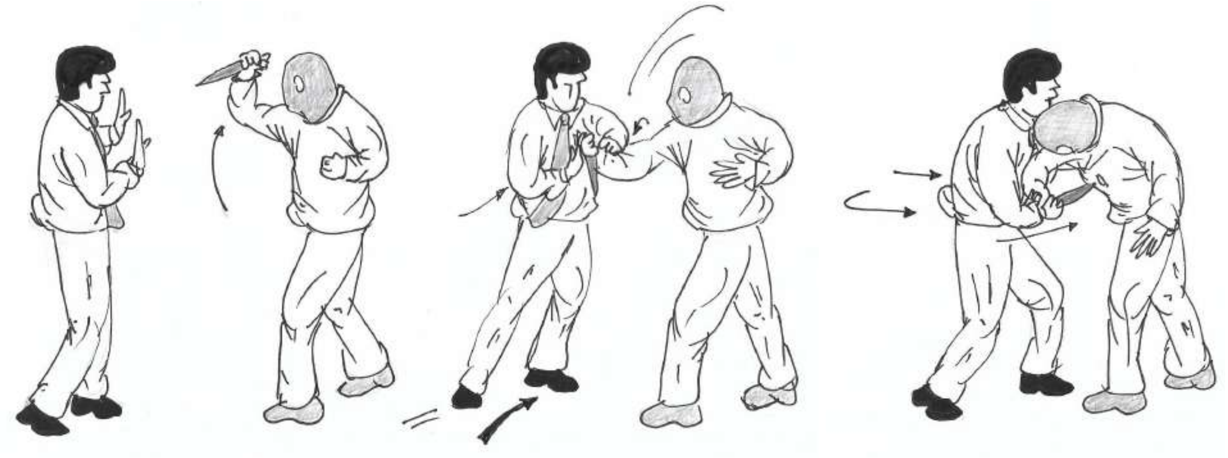
Our **first example**, and probably the most important, is illustrated below. It is clear how to go forward and out with a rear-hand deviating Block, and then use the momentum to simply push the aggressor away by the armed shoulder. You can then **run away** if possible, or, if you have no choice, to pursue him with a *Retzev* of Kicks.





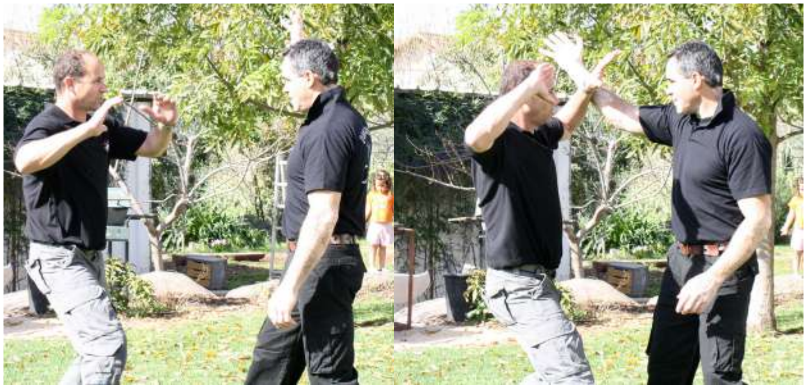
Evade diagonally forward and push the assailant violently away

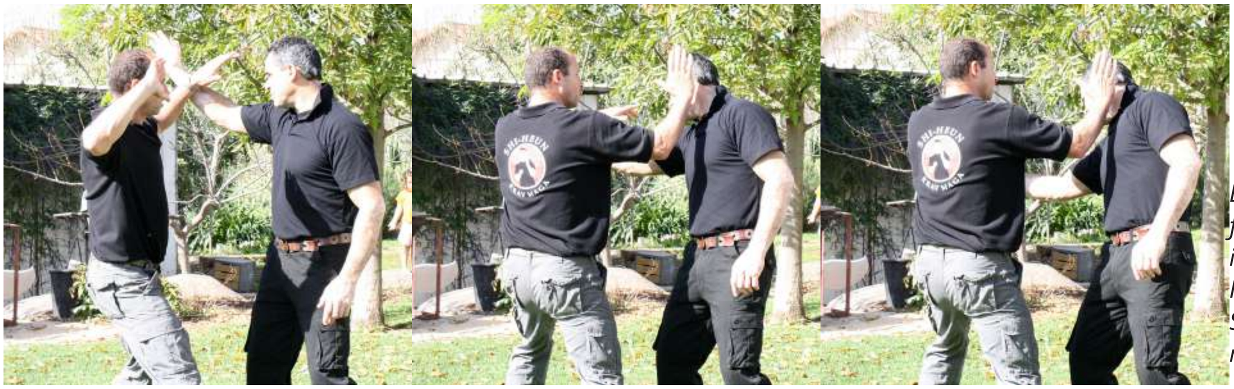
A much more sophisticated way to make use of a good evading forward step is presented in the next Drawings: you grab his armed wrist without blocking it and redirect it on its own momentum towards the opponent's trunk. Use both your hands for the redirect and your whole body for the push of the knife towards him. This specific '**Use his own knife against him**' technique is easier than it may seem, because of the use of the very powerful downward momentum. It still requires lots of drilling though, mainly for building the necessary self-confidence and ingrained automatisms.



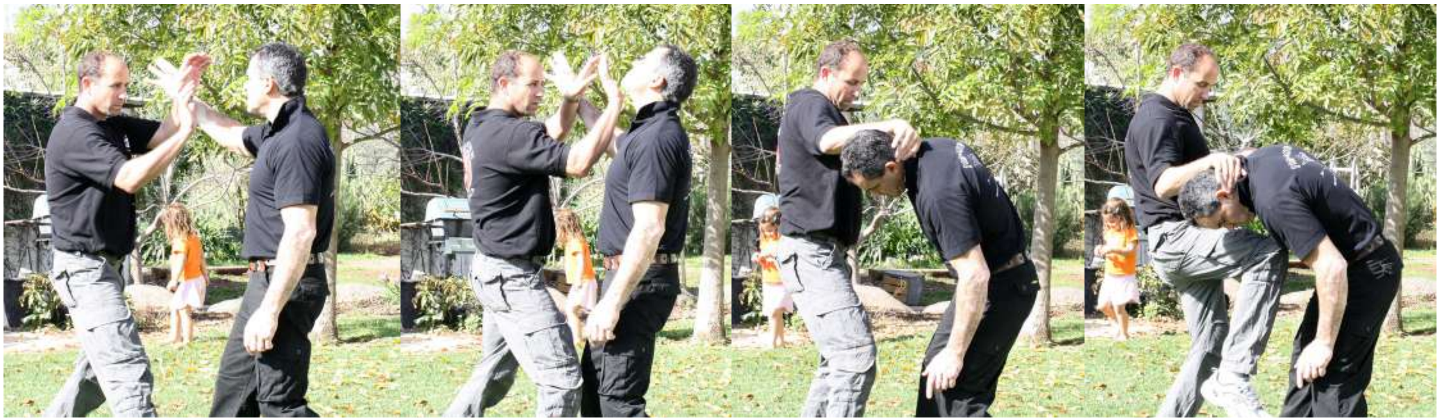
After the evasion forward and out, simply redirect the knife towards the assailant's belly

It is important to first master the simpler **Striking Techniques** to come after the forward evasion and control. We explained that in the introductory training section. Once you become trained and confident, the strikes will flow by themselves and you can proceed to the more sophisticated lock and disarm techniques. So here come a few striking options to drill, and to complete by your own preferred *Retzev* routines. Knife-hand Strikes, Palm Strikes, Knee Strikes,… Of course, never forget the eyes as a target!



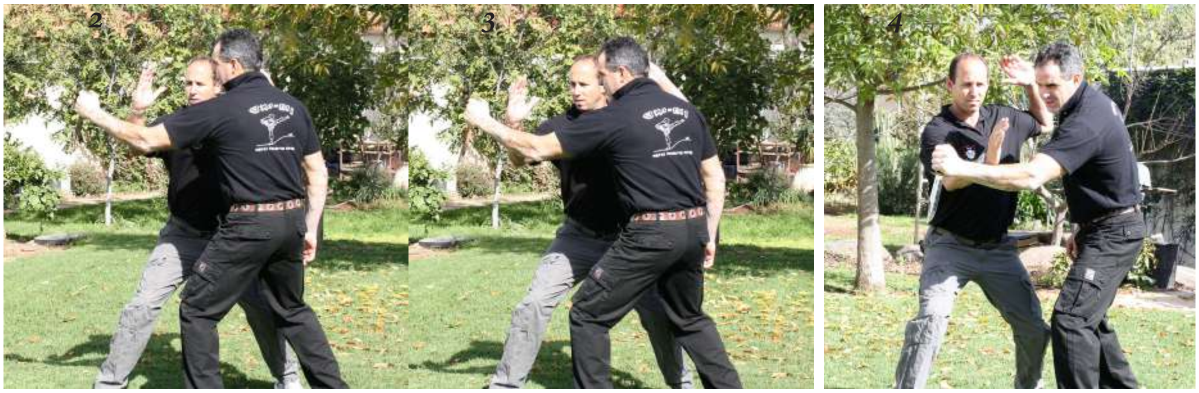


Evade forward and in with a Knifehand Strike to the neck

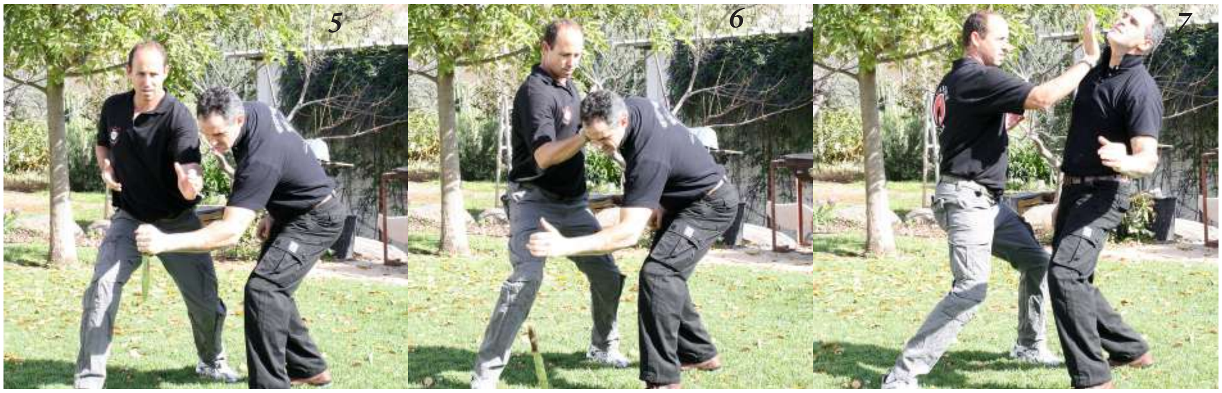


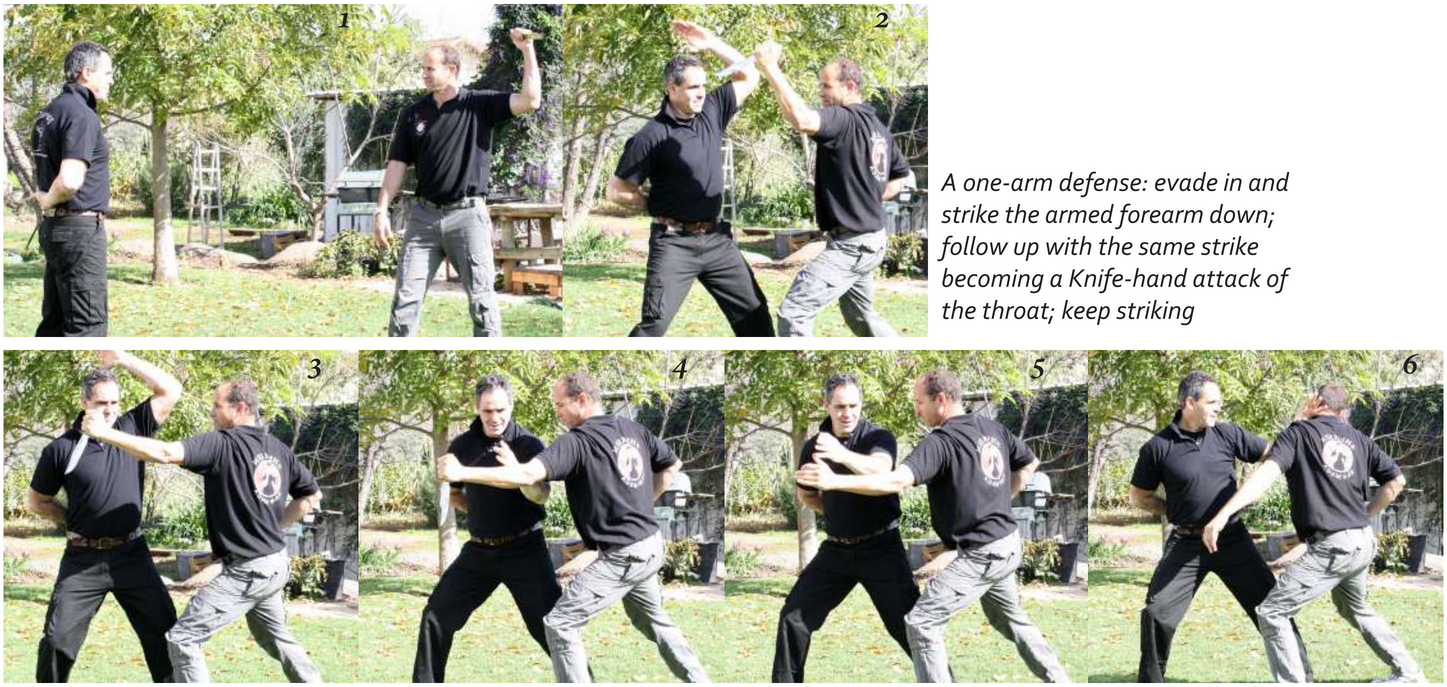
Another way to go: Palm Strike to the face or chin, and grab to pull the head into Knee Strike

The next sets of Photos will illustrate the evading move combined with a **Knife-hand Strike to the armed forearm**. The Strike's purpose is to hurt the arm and accelerate the downward trajectory of the knife; *it is not to disarm*, although disarming can be a side benefit that sometimes happens. This kind of attack on the armed forearm is kind of a Block and MUST be immediately followed by a strike to vital points as the start of a serious *Retzev*. We shall also illustrate an option in which only one hand is used, as if your second hand is encumbered or wounded.



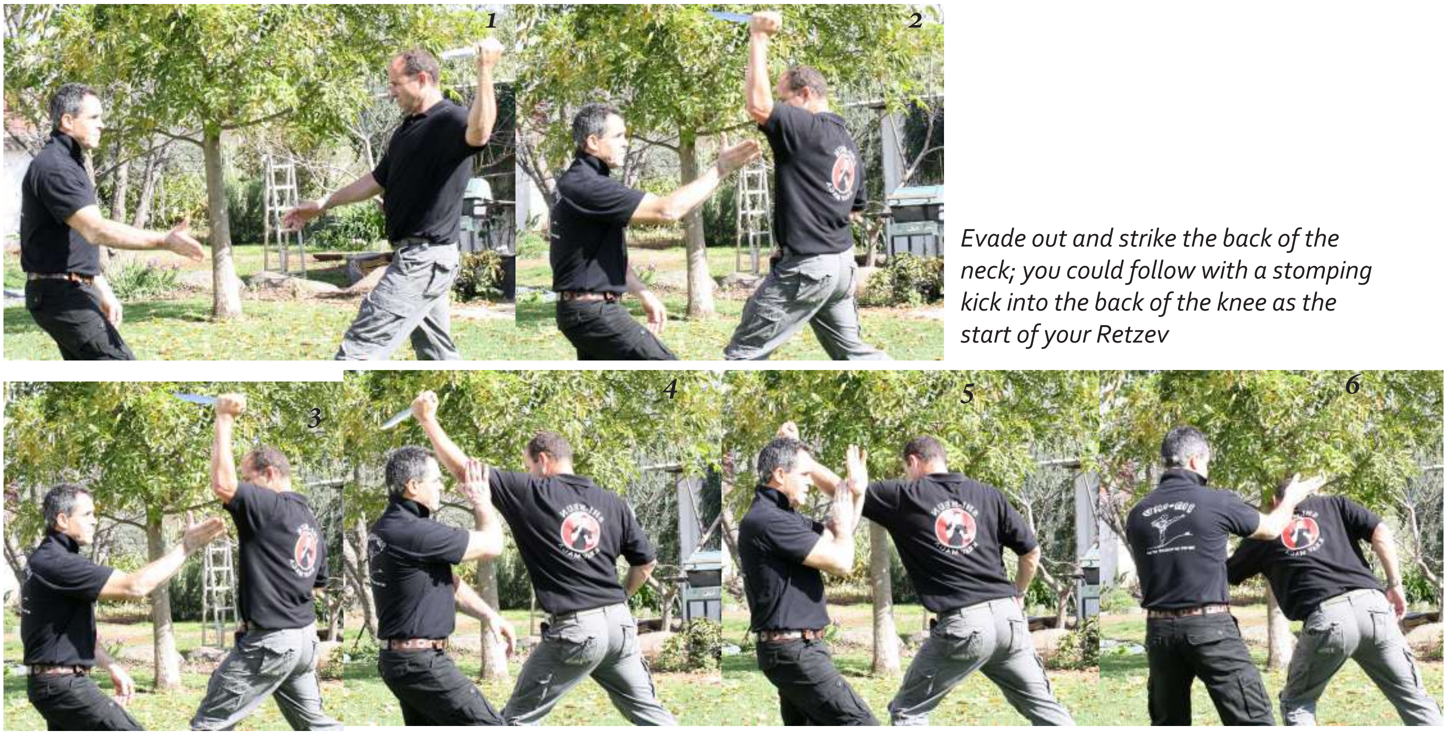
Evade and strike the armed forearm coming down; follow immediately with a Palm Strike to the chin





A one-arm defense: evade in and strike the armed forearm down; follow up with the same strike becoming a Knife-hand attack of the throat; keep striking

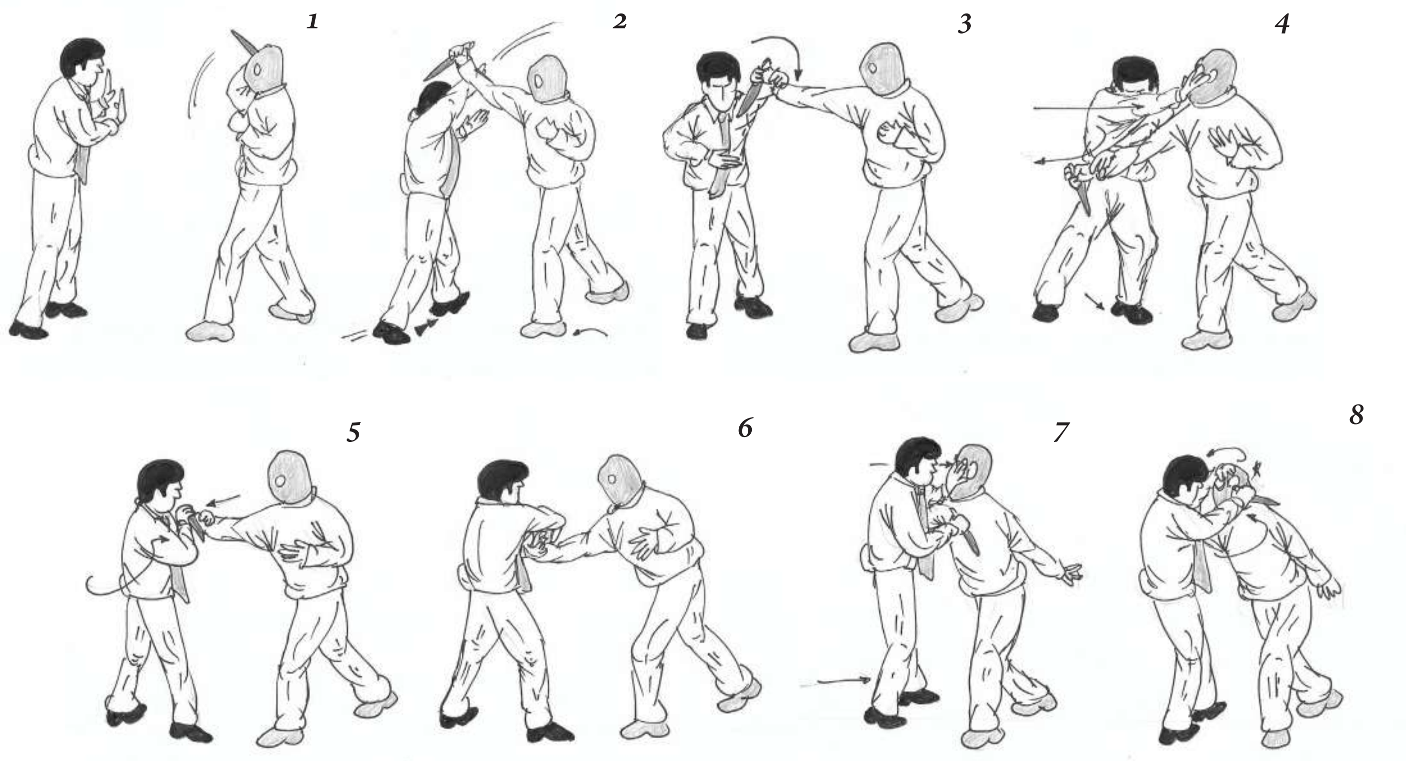
Of course, evading out follows the same principles.



Evade out and strike the back of the neck; you could follow with a stomping kick into the back of the knee as the start of your Retzev

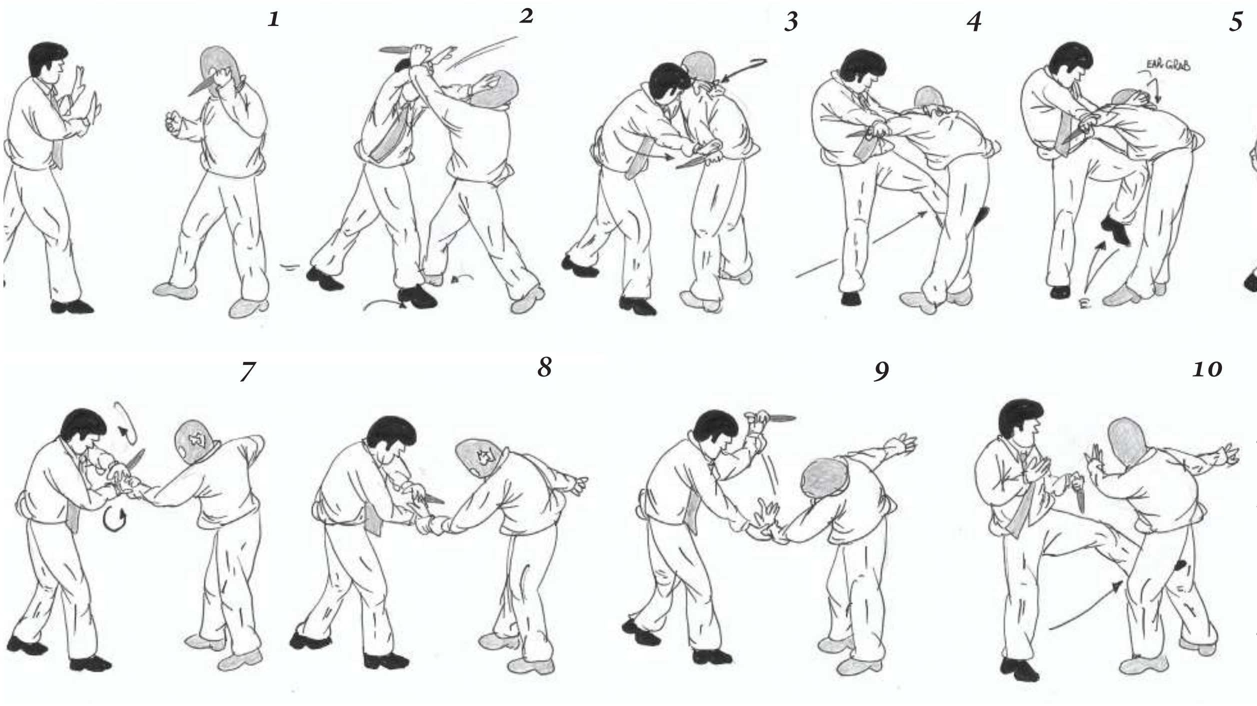
Once you have mastered the instinctive 'evade and strike' pattern, you can start to work on the **locking and disarming maneuvers**. Remember that they will only work after mollifying strikes to the opponent's vital points.

The **first** example, illustrated below, with evading out and redirecting with the rear hand. You can then grab the armed wrist with the other hand while poking the eyes of the attacker. Start the basic disarming technique on the wounded assailant and attack his eyes again as soon as you have grabbed the weapon. Keep your fingers around his eyes to pull his head back. You can now use the handle of the knife for another strike to the side of his face.



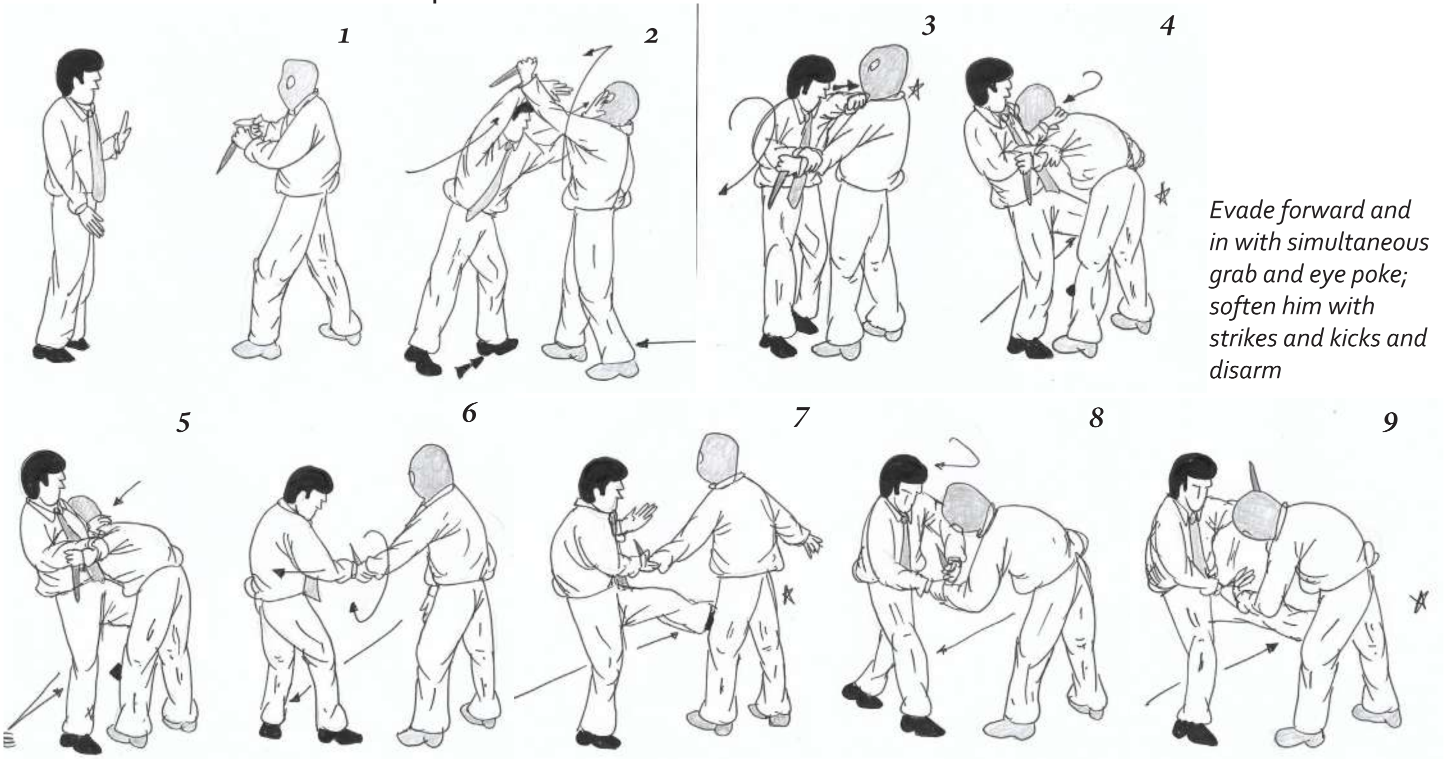
Evade out and attack the eyes to allow for an easy disarm

Our next example will start with an **inside evasion**. The Drawings at the top of next page illustrate how to go *forward and in* while attacking the aggressor's eyes and while blocking. Your block becomes a grab and you kick the opponent's groin while controlling his shoulder. Your Groin Kick rebounds back on the floor for a knee strike and your shoulder hand goes to grab his ear. Lower your leg deep rearwards while pulling his ear towards you and twisting his armed wrist. He should be sufficiently mollified for a Disarm that you can cap with another Groin Kick.



Evade forward and in with a grabbing Block and an eye poke; soften the aggressor with vicious kicks and an ear tear; then go to classic disarm

Our last set starts with a **forward-inside evasion** and a simultaneous Grabbing Block and Eye Poke. Use the forward momentum to strike his throat with your forearm and twist his caught armed wrist. Your forward momentum drives the Groin Knee and neck pull, and you can let your foot rebound on the floor for a second Knee Strike to the groin or midsection. Go back and pull his grabbed arm while twisting it further and use the distance for a Groin Kick. He should now be ripe for a classic Disarm capped by another Groin Kick. Keep at it.



Evade forward and in with simultaneous grab and eye poke; soften him with strikes and kicks and disarm

8.9 Straight Pokes and Stabs

Pokes and Stabs are attacks that are more difficult to deal with: they are fast and do not require chambering. They also are less impulsive and more planned, and they lend themselves to feints and misdirection. Again, it is best not to be there on grounds of having fled; but if you have no choice...

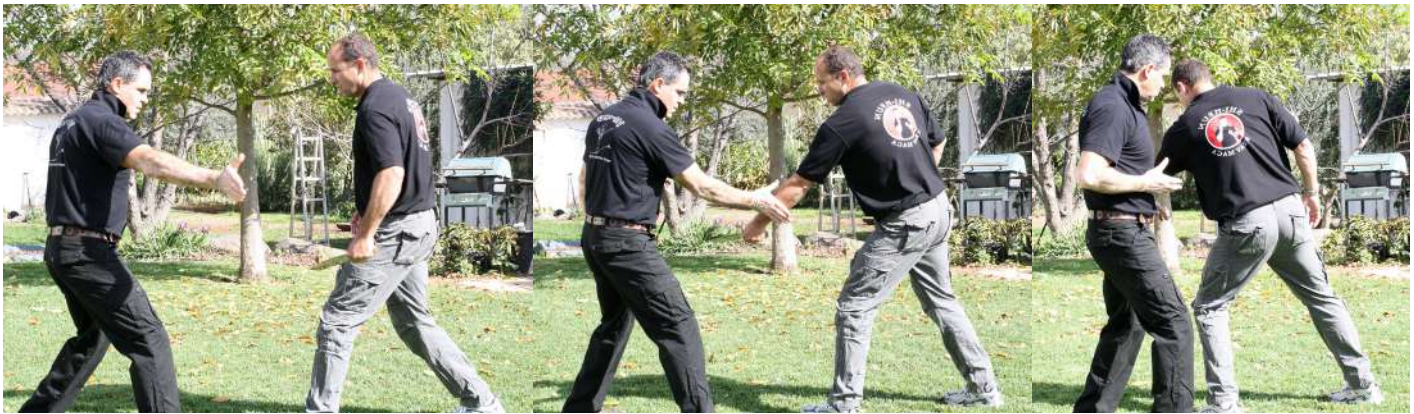
These attacks are simple extension of the arm, just like punches. They can be directed high, towards the face and neck; at middle level towards the stomach and heart; or low, in a generally upward trajectory towards the lower belly.

Dealing with **Pokes and Stabs** will usually be with forward evasions and vital points strikes; and for more advanced fighters, with additional locks and disarms. Sometimes, you can be surprised with an attack and will have to rely on blocks instead of forward evasions.

Pokes and Stabs are often used after lots of playing around, fake stabs and threatening moves to intimidate the victim. Remember that in such a case of a threatening assailant moving his blade around in front of you with overconfidence, you should launch a preemptive attack as described in the previous sections; do not wait for a possible real and dangerous stab.

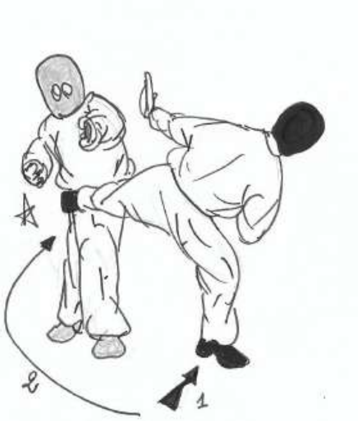
The first stage in learning to deal with **Pokes and Stab** will be the drilling of evasions followed by strikes.

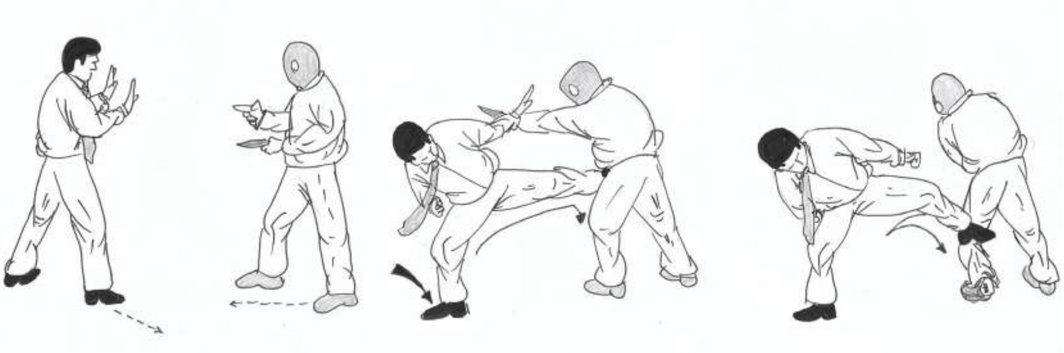
The first Photos show a simple **block and evade** move that places you in control of his back for a follow-up.



Evade out and Block

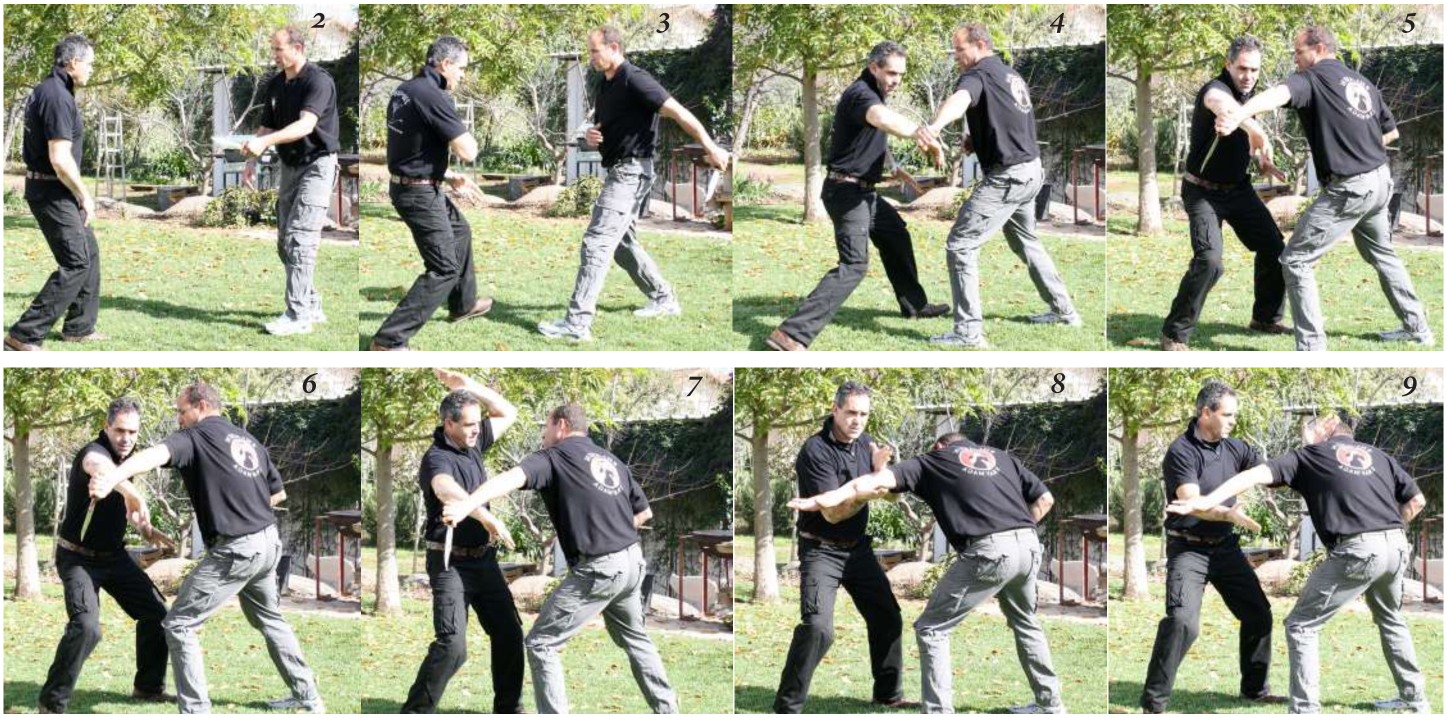
The coming Illustrations, at the top of next page, show in turn how to **evade and kick**. You evade *forward and out* against a full Stab and keep general control of the armed hand while kicking the assailant's groin with a fast Body-bent Roundhouse. Follow up with a Stomping Side Kick to the back of his knee and keep at it.





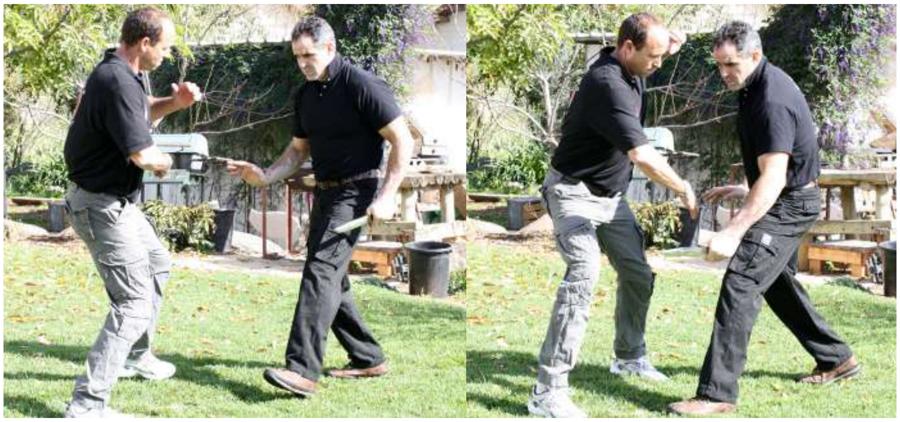
Evade and groin-kick

One of the possibilities after an evading and blocking a Knife Stab, is to reserve the **first subsequent Strike for the attacking forearm**. One can hope to help release the knife, although it will not happen every time. But the Strike will hurt, numb the arm, further deviate the knife strike and give you the time to start your *Retzev*. In our example, you evade a low (*and slightly upward*) belly stab *forward and in*. You block and deviate the strike out and upwards in order to bring the elbow up for a Downward Knife-hand Strike. Stat a *Retzev*, preferably with an Eye attack.

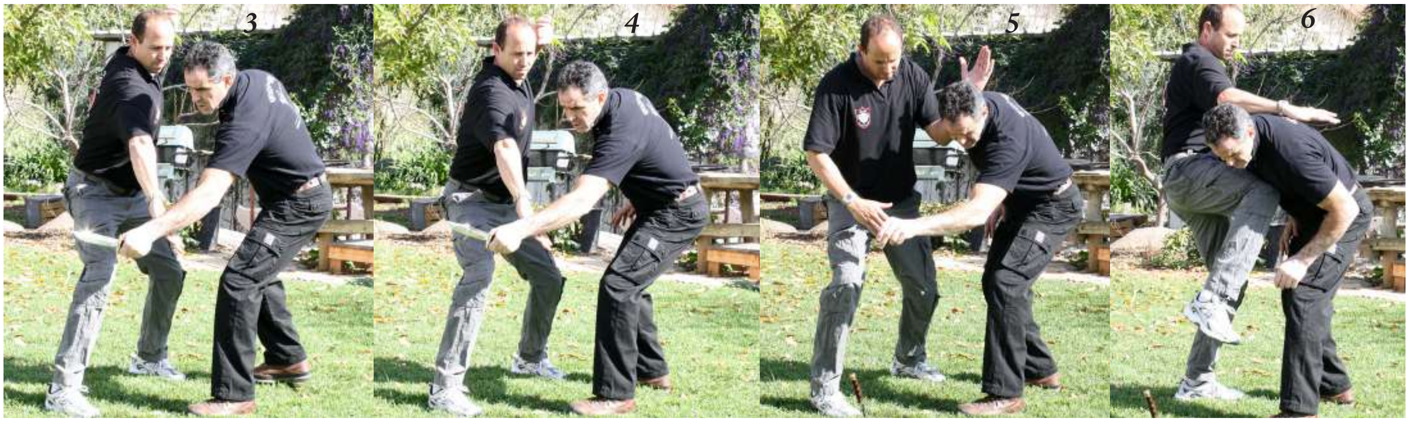


Evade forward and in and strike the offending elbow before starting your vital points strikes

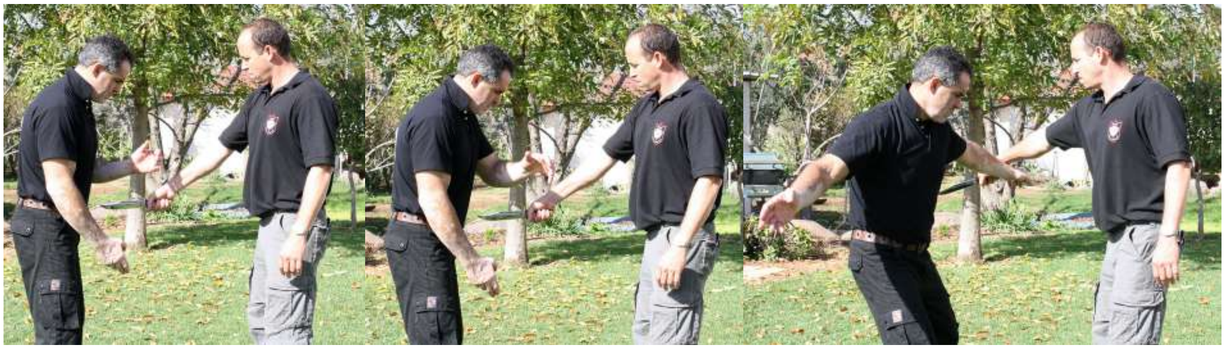
Of course, you can also forget the strike to the attacking elbow and go directly for the start of your Strikes series. In the Photos below, with a **Knife-hand Strike to the neck** and a Knee Strike for starters.

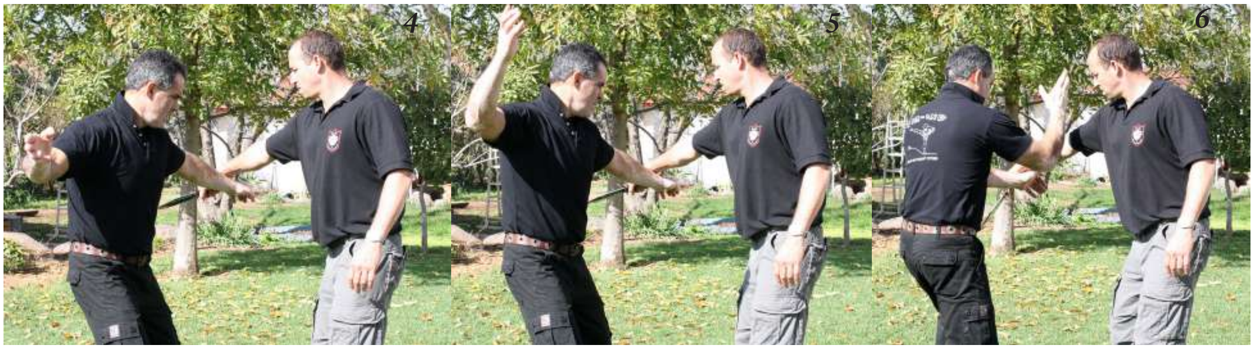


Evade, block and start striking



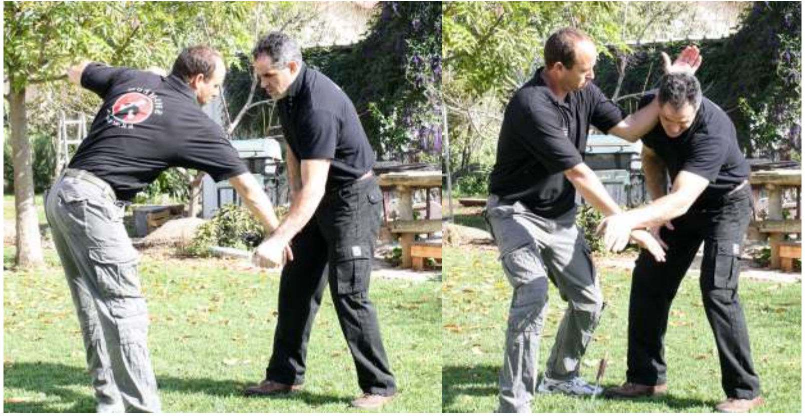
The point of the coming Photos is first to show the **numbing Arm Strike** from another angle. It is also to illustrate the fact that, in dealing with an attack from close up, you will not always have the time to evade forward but will have to rely on blocking only.



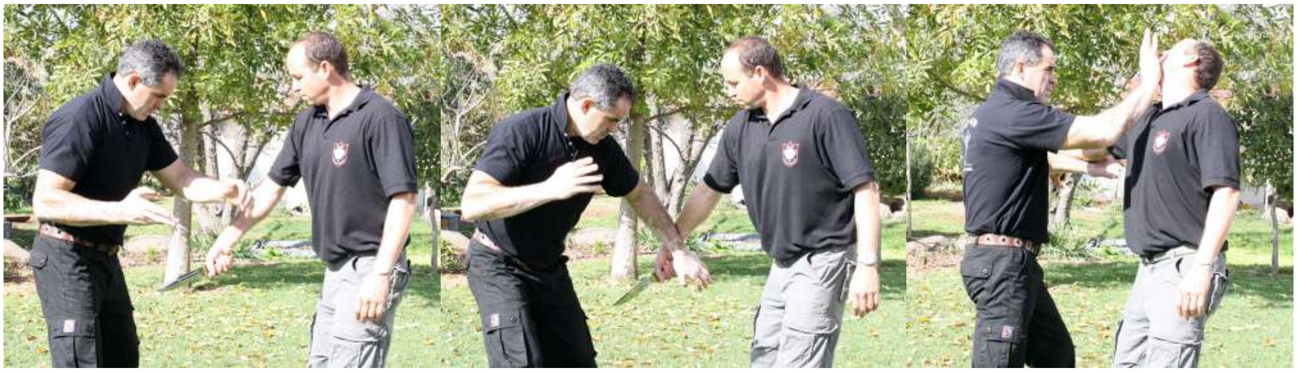


From close up, just block and strike the armed elbow first

Of course, even from close up, your reaction can also be to block and **follow up without hitting the attacking arm**. In the examples below, you can see a Knife-hand attack to the neck **or** a Palm Strike to the chin *as starting points*.

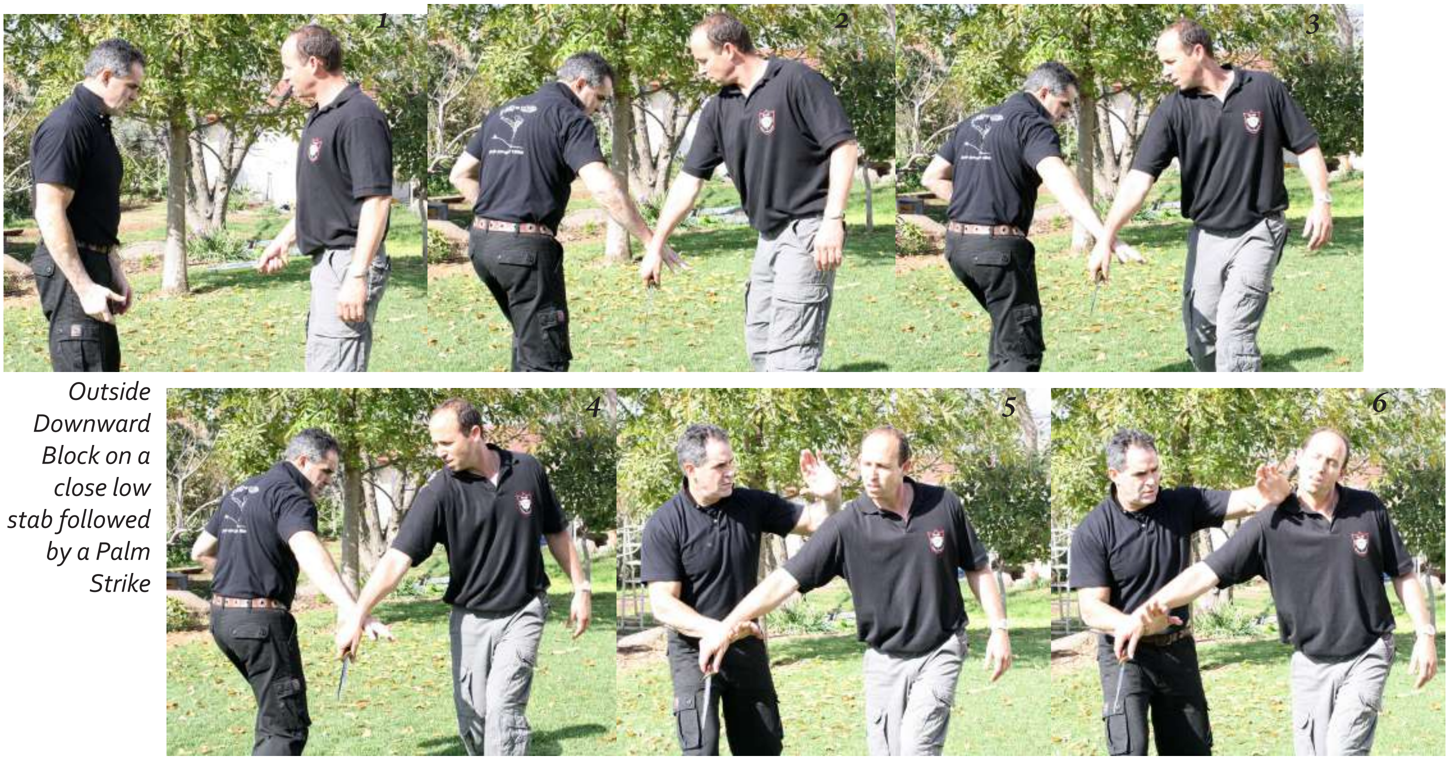


Pull your belly back as you block; knife-hand the neck for starters



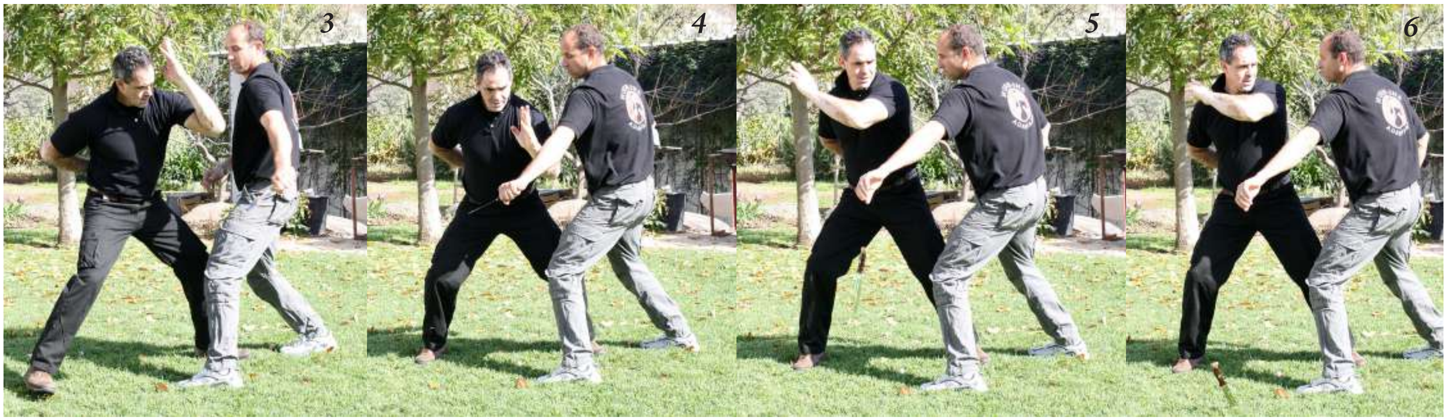
Block a close Stab and palm-strike the chin with all you have

Of course, blocking a low stab from close-up can also be done **outside-in**, with a following Palm Strike as a start of the *Retzev*.



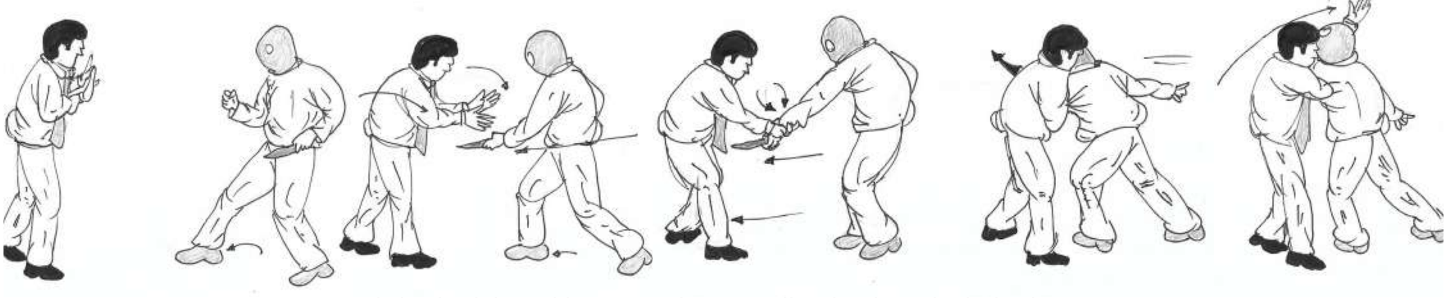
Outside Downward Block on a close low stab followed by a Palm Strike

We will conclude this ‘drilling strikes’ part with a **one-arm evade/block/strike** sequence that is good to practice for a deep intuitive understanding of evading, of blocking and of striking an armed forearm. It also could be relevant to dealing with an assailant in spite of being wounded in one arm. Evade a committed low stab forward and in. Block the stab with a powerful Downward Knife-hand Strike on the forearm. Keep the momentum of the Strike to come back with an Outward Knife-hand Strike to the throat.



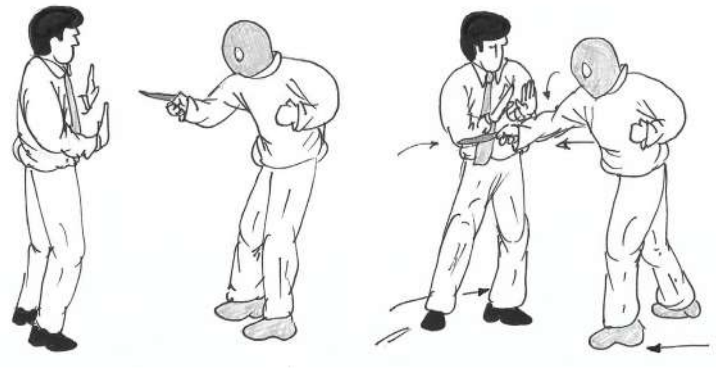
One-armed defense: evade, strike the attacking arm and go for the throat

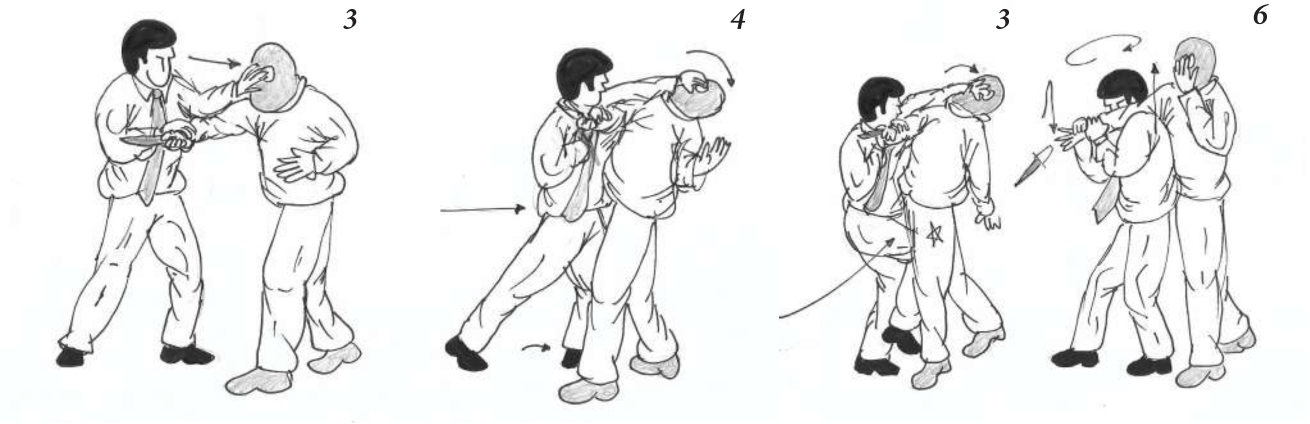
When you are *surprised* by a stab, evasion will sometimes have to be **rearwards**; and it is sometimes the instinctive thing that will happen and on which you will have to build your defense. The coming drill is therefore important. Against a committed low stab, you retreat and grab the armed wrist from above in something very close to an instinctive reaction. Drill it and it will become fully instinctive. Keep retreating while pulling the armed wrist forward *violently*. In doing so, you make use of the momentum of the assailant’s attack and slightly deviate it. Once the attacker loses his balance forward, you come back in a classic and very effective ‘Clothesline Maneuver’. It will get him on the ground with a bruised face. From there you either run away or stomp-kick his limbs.



Evade back while grabbing armed wrist; pull violently and “clothesline”!

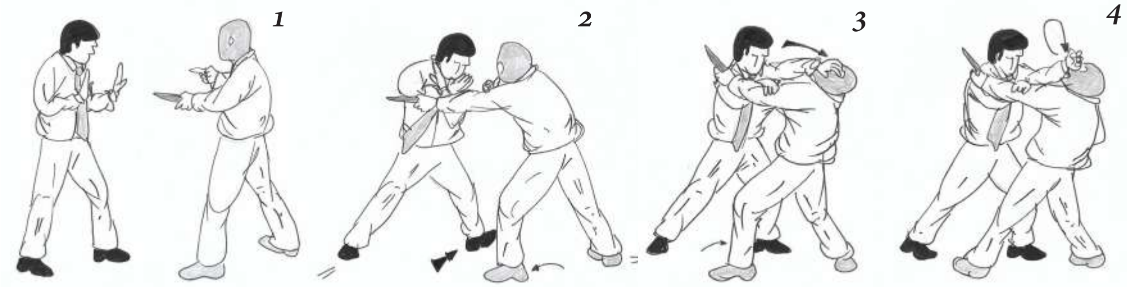
But the preferred evasion, like always in *Krav Maga*, will be forward if possible. In the coming Drawings, a mid-level stab is **evaded forward and out**. The rear hand will then immediately grab the armed wrist while the other goes for the eyes. Keep your forward momentum and keep your fingers in the attacker's eyes. Knee his groin. You have now softened him enough for a pivot and an elbow-break (=violent Lock) on you shoulder.



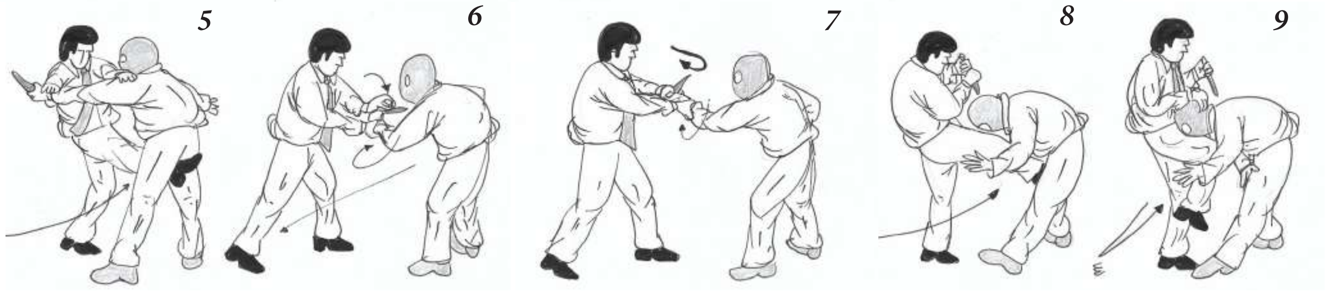


Evade forward and out, grab, poke the eyes and knee the groin, pivot for armlock

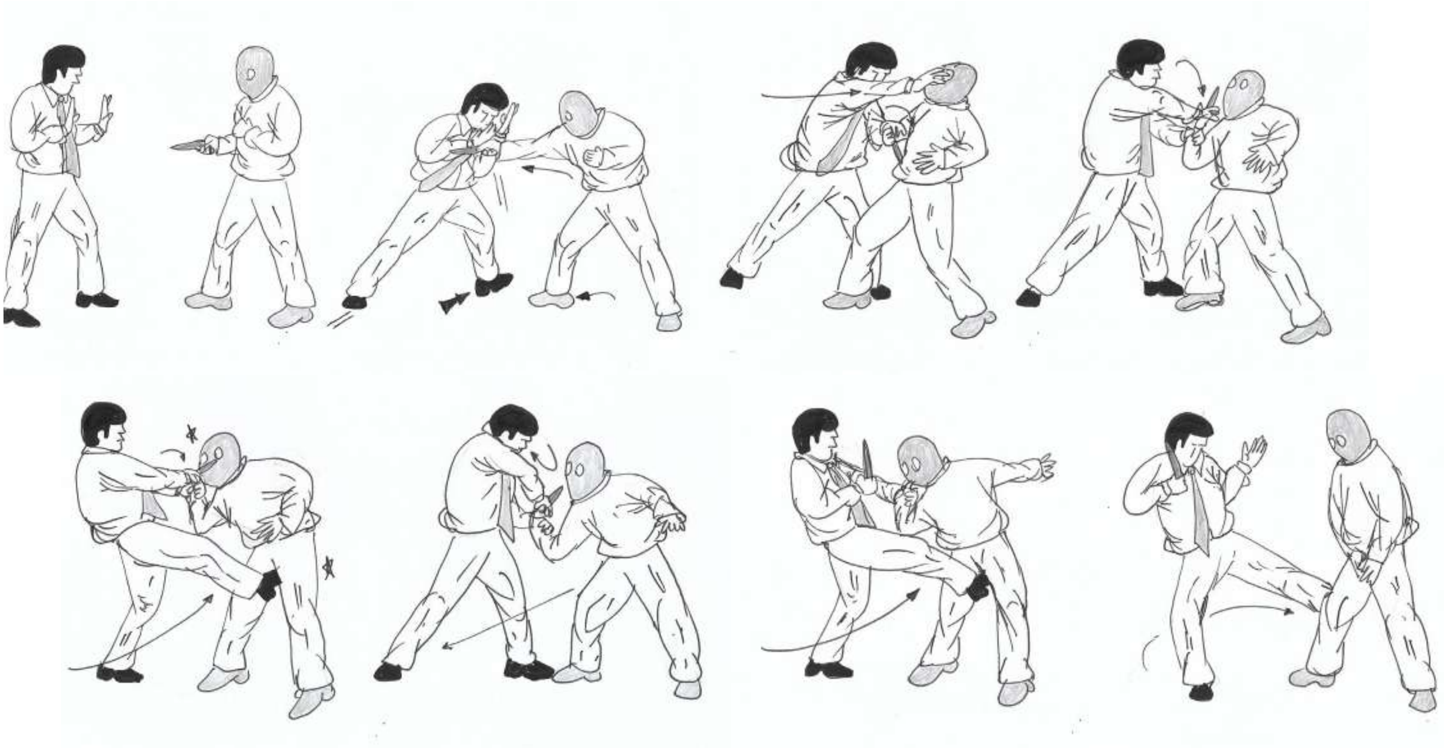
The following Illustrations will show an **Inside Evasion and the more classic Disarm**. You diagonally evade a mid-level stab *inside and forward*. Grab the armed arm while going for the eyes, and let the poke evolve into a Hammer-fist Strike to the nose. A groin Kick will soften him even more to allow pulling back and setting up the hold for the classic Wrist Lock. Twist his wrist and peel the knife out if possible. A groin kick and rebounding knee to the face should put you firmly in charge.



Evade forward and in, grab, strike repeatedly to prepare the Disarm



Of course, the same kind of series is applicable to an **outward evasion**: strike, disarm and keep striking. The Drawings illustrate how to evade a mid-level stab *forward and out*, and grab the wrist while attacking the eyes. Kick the groin while setting up the Disarming Lock. Keep kicking after the Disarm.

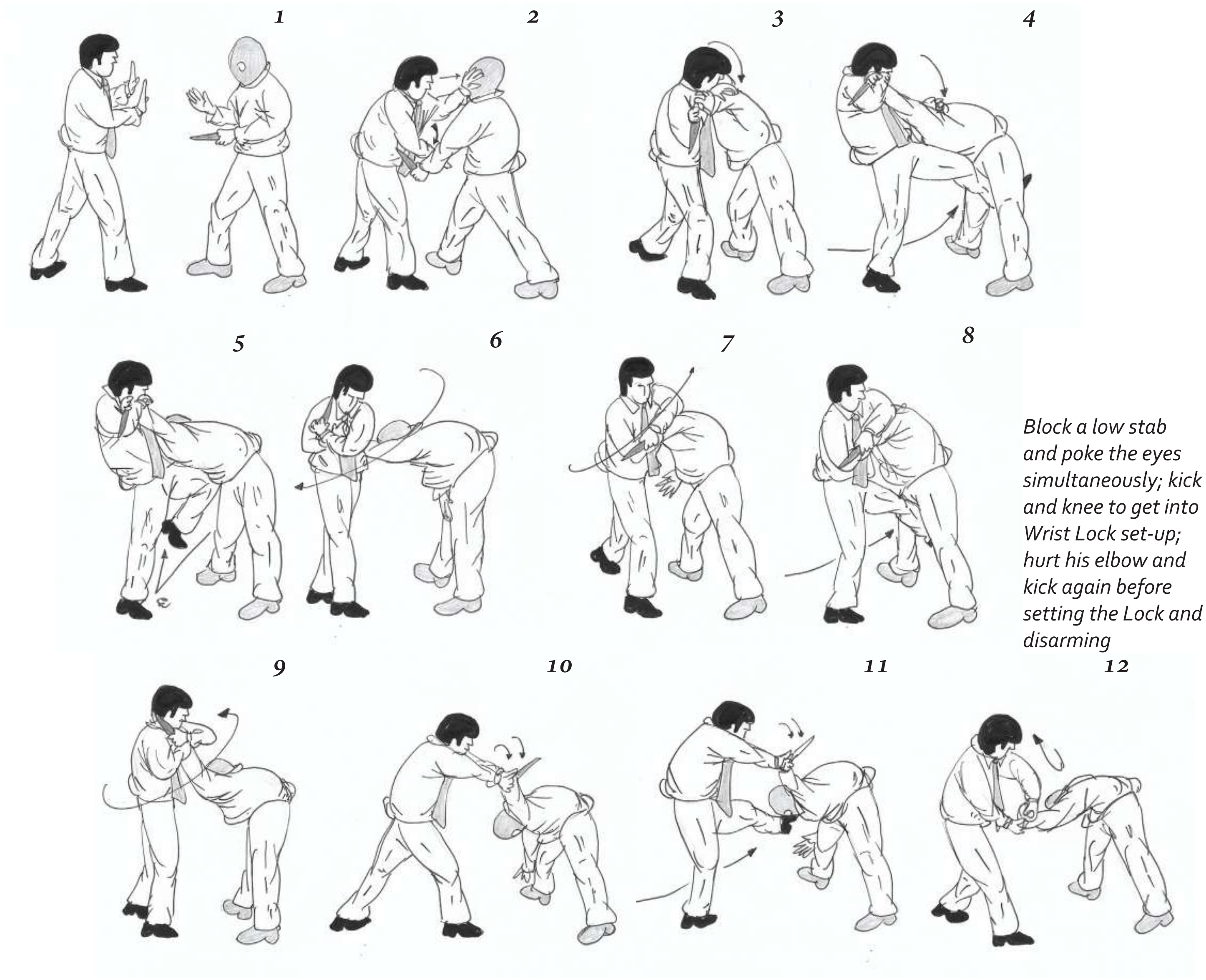


Evade forward and out, go for the eyes, kick and disarm and keep kicking

If the attack **surprises you from too close**, you should learn to *go for the Block forward without evasion*. The series illustrated at the top of next page illustrates how to block and poke the eyes *simultaneously*. Envelop the stabbing arm from inside out and kick the groin while the eye-poking hand pulls his shoulder forward. The kick rebounds into a knee strike and you can use your hips to come over his arm with your own in order to get a two-handed grip for the classic Wrist Lock. This move is *violent* in order to cause also some elbow damage; use all you body. Once you have the grip, kick his groin again and pivot back into the full Wrist Lock. Kick his face as he bends in pain and peel the knife out. Keep at it.

➤

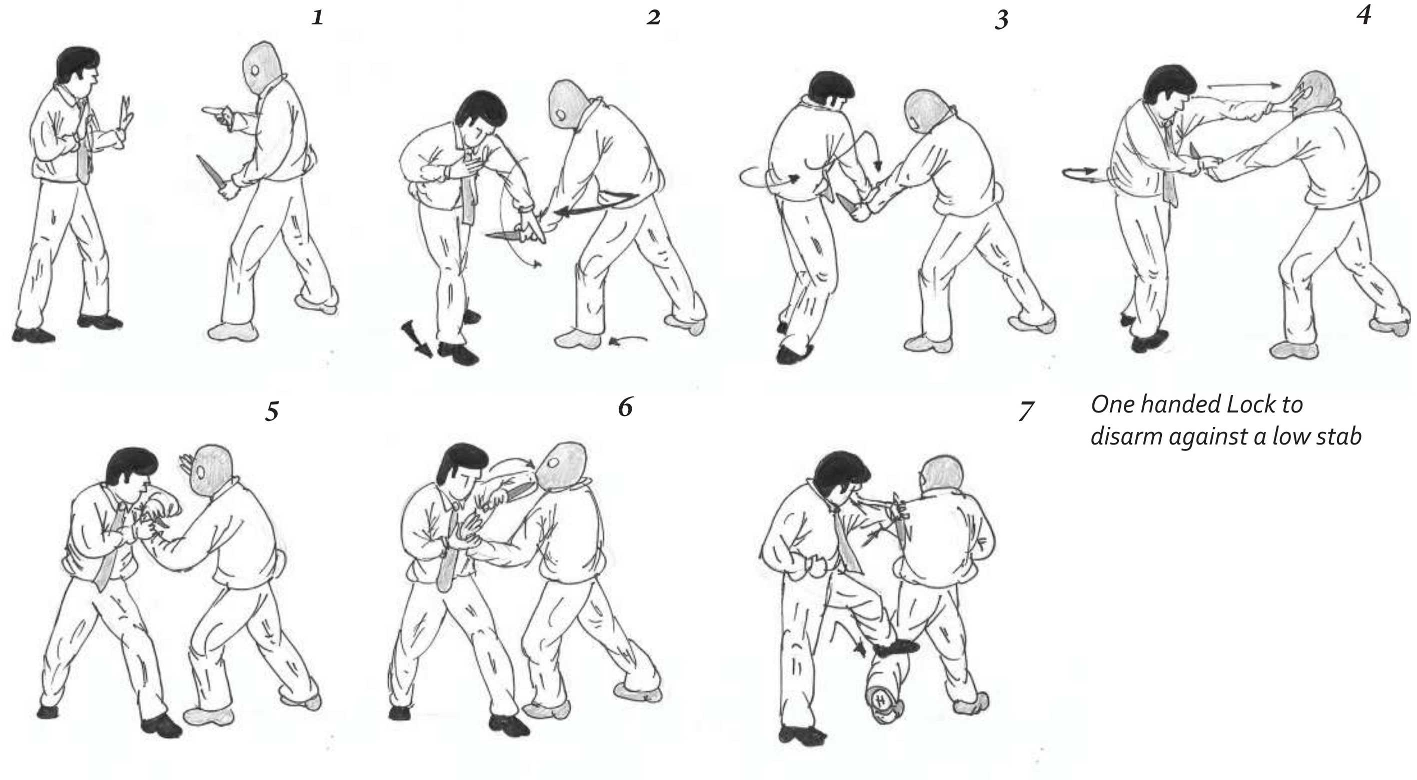
Self-defense is the only honourable course where there is unreadiness for self-immolation.
~Mahatma Gandhi



Block a low stab and poke the eyes simultaneously; kick and knee to get into Wrist Lock set-up; hurt his elbow and kick again before setting the Lock and disarming

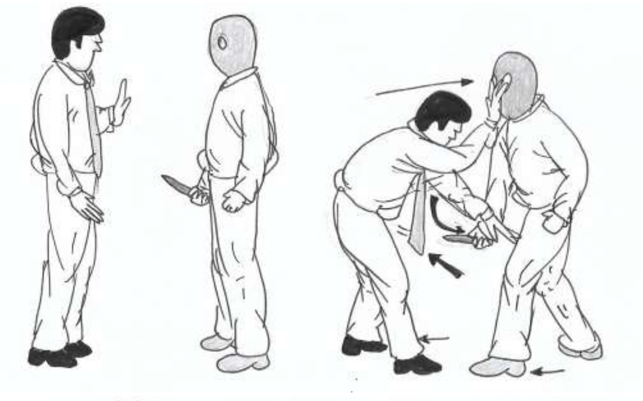
There are several ways to **block and then get into a Wrist Lock set up**. It will have to be your body on autopilot and therefore it is good to drill several possible ways. In the Drawings at the top of next page, you evade a low stab *forward and out* while blocking down with your *rear* hand. You should then switch hands to get in set-up position with your front hand, while the rear one goes for the eyes. You can now go for the Disarm on the locked hand. Use your elbow to strike his face as you peel off the knife and stomp the back of his knee before starting a *Retzev*. Drill this for a fast hand switch and a one-handed Lock for Disarm.

➔

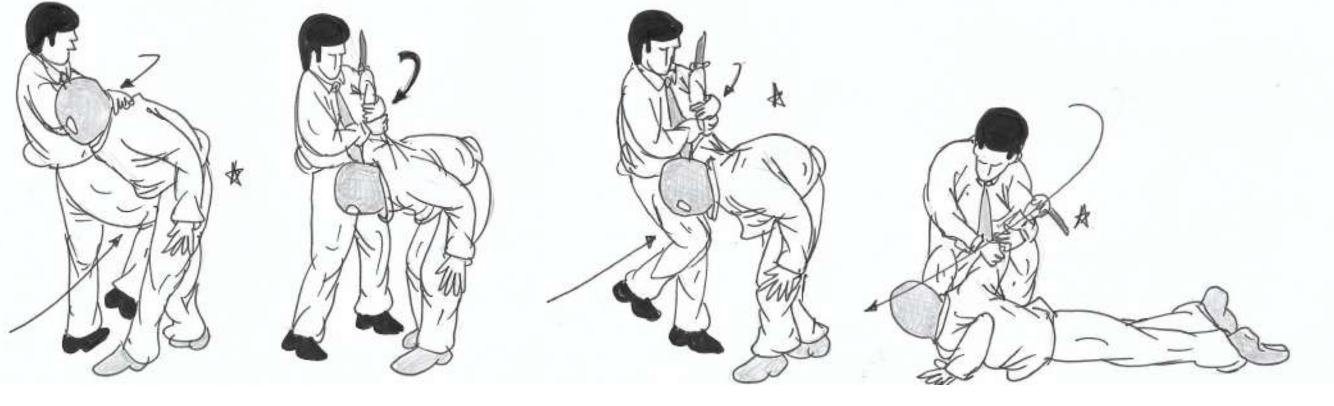


One handed Lock to disarm against a low stab

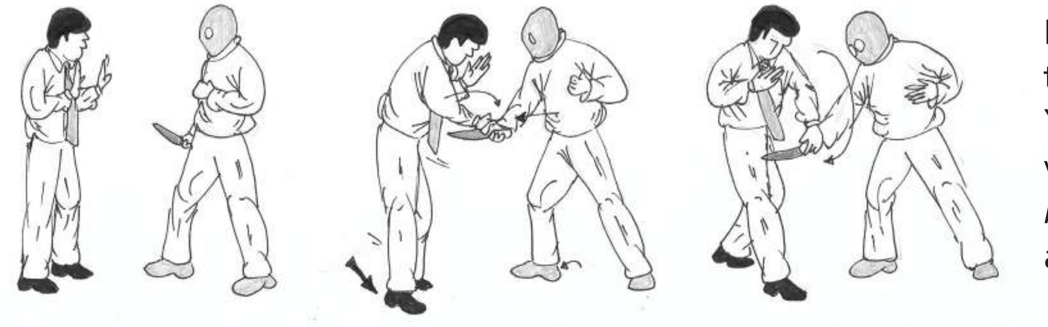
The next Illustrations show another type of **Arm Lock** in a defense against a close upward stab to the lower belly. As you are surprised, you pull back your belly while blocking down and striking his eyes. Your block becomes an enveloping of his arm while you knee his groin. The groin strike should allow you to set the classic elbow and shoulder lock. Remember to set it up *brusquely* for maximum damage. Knee his face and then twist violently down to force him to the ground. Place your knee on his *neck* to maintain him in place as you twist *violently* to dislocate his shoulder and elbow. You can leave him and run away or stand up to stomp his ankles.

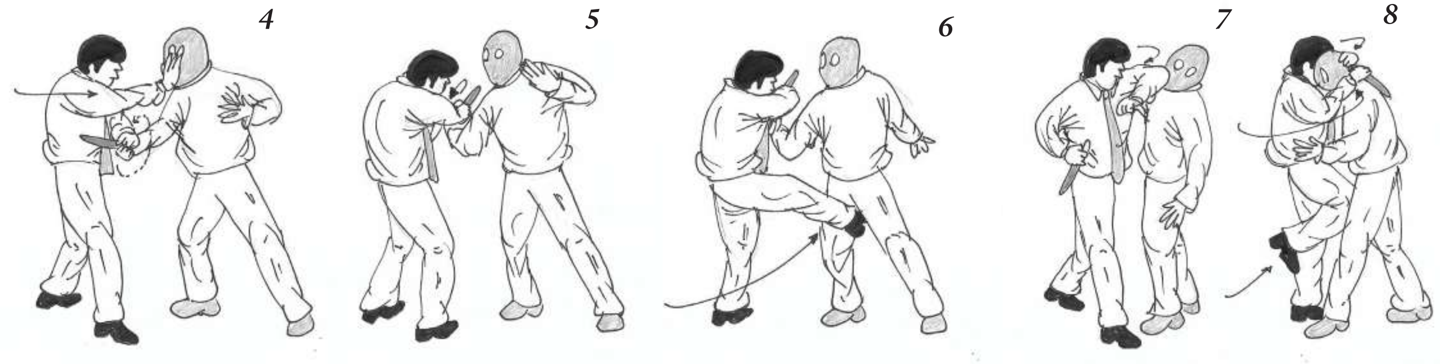


Pull back to evade a sudden low stab and block while striking his eyes; strike to allow the set up of a classic Shoulder Lock



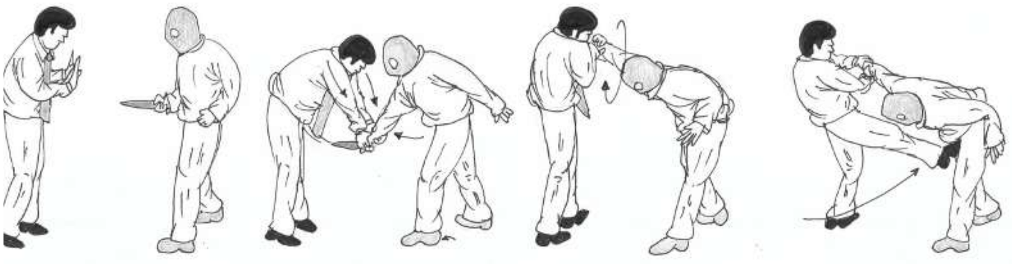
You should also drill the **'switching hands'** on a sudden low stab. In the Illustrations below, you can see how to do a Downward Block with the 'rear' hand and then *switch hands for a grip that leads to the Wrist Lock set up*. Strike the eyes and twist his grabbed wrist to get into full Lock position. Kick his groin to facilitate the subsequent peeling off of the knife. A circular Elbow to the head will then stun him further. You can catch his head violently, *using the handle of his own knife*, and knee his groin.

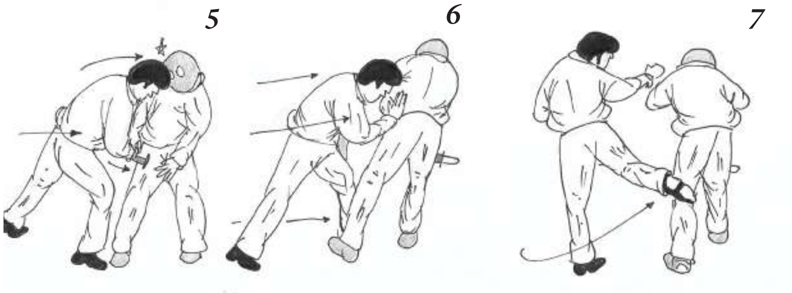




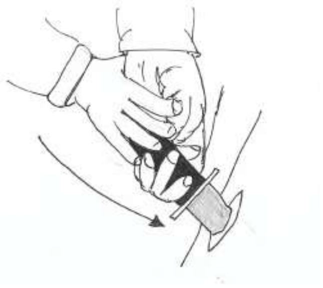
Block a low stab with one hand and grab the wrist with the other; strike and disarm; and keep striking

The instinctive pulling back of the belly and grabbing of the attacking wrist from above can be used to build a very efficient '**use his own knife against him**' defense series. Evade back and grab his attacking wrist with both hands. Twist his wrist violently with *both* your hands and kick his groin. Use *both* hands to bend his arm and stab him with his own knife, wherever you'll be able to push. Use *both hands and the whole body* to lunge at him and stab him. To help explode towards him, you should think of also headbutting his face. Use the momentum to push him away and 'low-kick' his knee as he stumbles back.

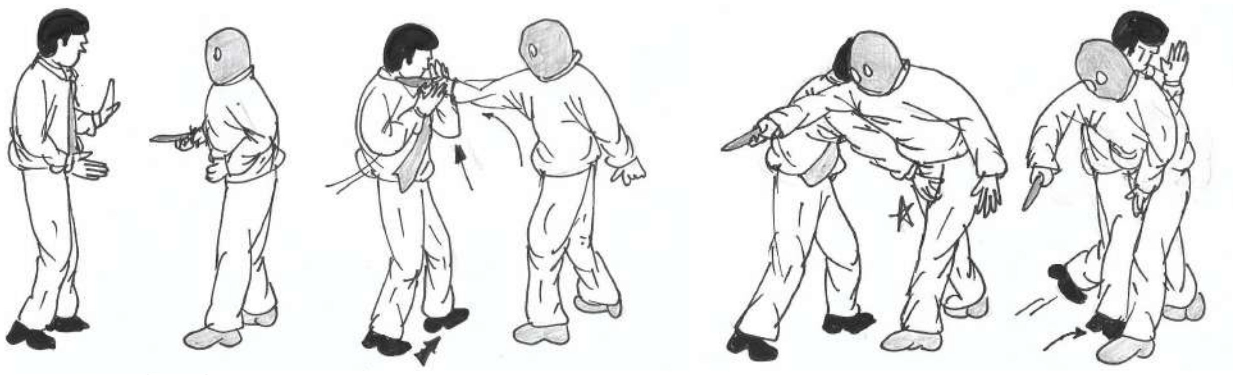


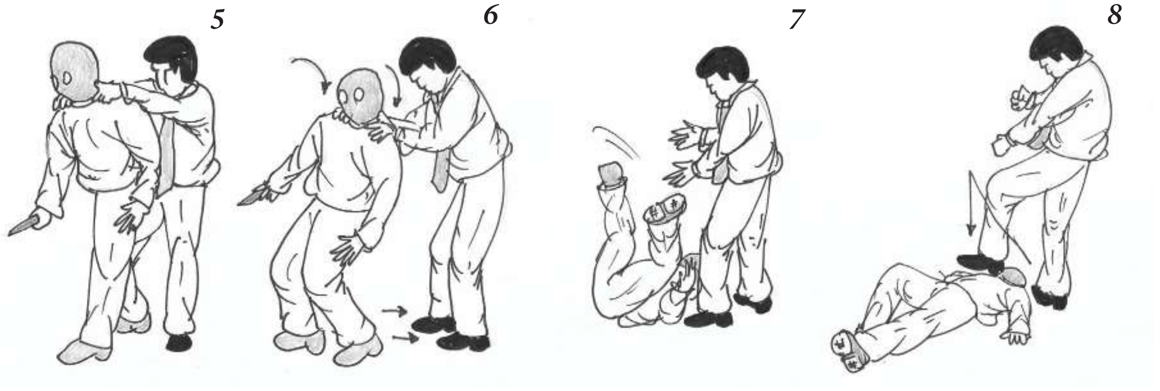


Learn to use the instinctive pull-back-and-grab reaction for an all-out 'use his own knife against him' explosion



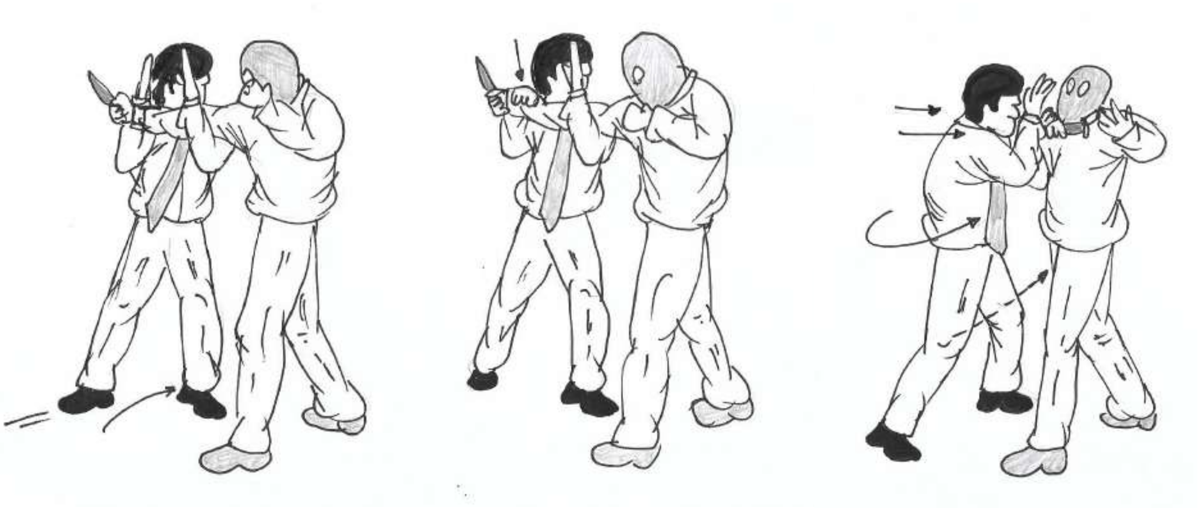
The **high stab towards the head and throat** should be dealt with like a punch: evade diagonally forward and block. Then strike. The Illustrations below show how to go *forward* with a deviating front-hand block and then palm-strike his groin violently. You use the forward momentum for the groin strike and in order to pass behind him and 'own' his back. Grab his shoulders (or eyes from behind) and pull him down brusquely. Stomp him as he lands.





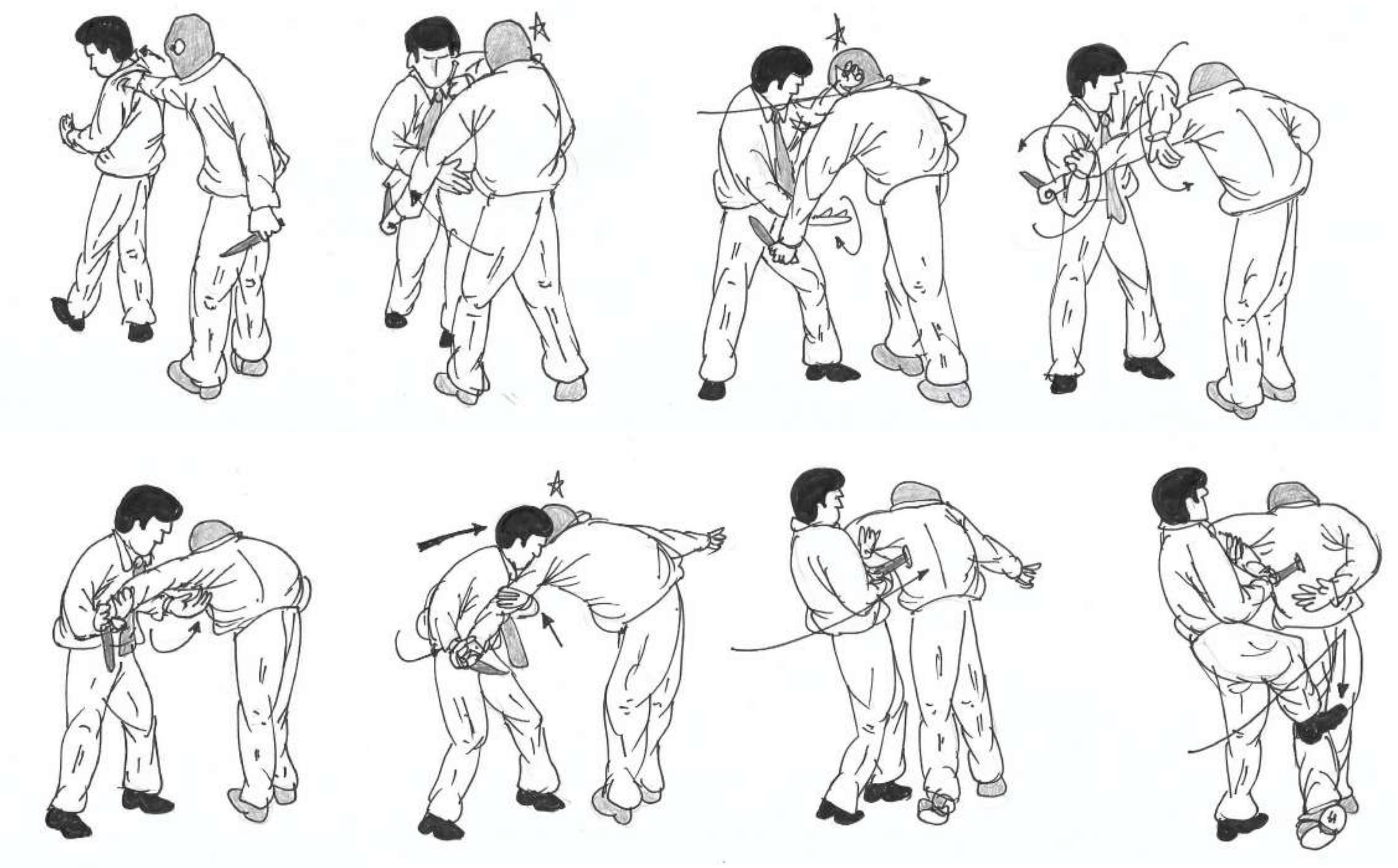
Simple and efficient: evade and block, strike the groin and pull him down from behind

The advanced '**use his own knife**' defense against a **high stab** is as follow: Evade and block, and then use your other arm to come in around his elbow to hyperextend it. You can then bend it and *use all your body* to push it towards him and stab him wherever you'll get. Simple, efficient but requires training. Do not attempt before you have mastered the strikes version and the lock versions.



Block, hyperextend, bend and push the knife towards the attacker

We shall conclude with a **low stabbing attack from behind**, in which the assailant grabs you by the shoulder to turn you around and try to eviscerate you. Of course, a defense from an attack from behind will only work if you are in a state of readiness. You know that trouble is to be expected and your sixth sense is hard at work; or you are trying to turn and leave when this happens. In fact, you block this just like for any other surprise low stabbing we have seen before: block while keeping you lower belly away. But as he pulls you towards him, use the momentum to crowd him with your upper body and strike his head with the elbow or even the head. Envelop his arm while you keep striking him on the neck or head, and bend him in classic Armlock. But do not proceed with the armlock. Instead, strike his inner elbow to bend his arm and explode towards him *with all your body.* Headbutt the side of his head and stab him with his own knife. Use *both hands and the power of your hips*. You can then stomp the back of his knee to bring him down.



Use his own knife against him in this advanced defense against a low stab from behind

8.10 Slashes

Inward and Outward Slashes are also dangerous attacks. They are fast and difficult to block, and they lend themselves to easy feinting. Just like stabs, they are also much used as threatening moves or as misdirecting moves before a real full-out attack. **Slashes** are also ideal small moves to cause bloodletting without being lethal. Attrition by small cuts contributes to the demoralizing psychological effect of having the victim see his own blood.

There are only **two** ways to deal with **slashes**, irrelevant to them being regular inward slashes or backhand outward slashes:

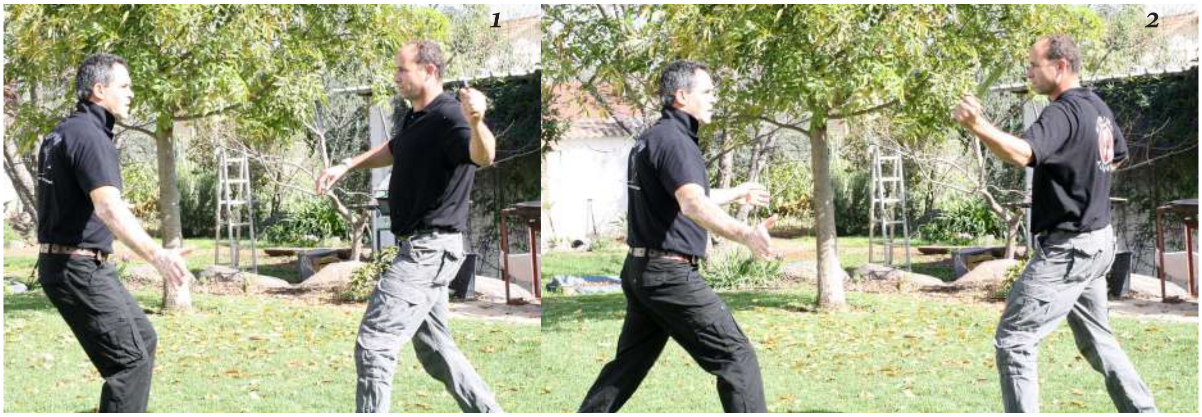
- *Jump into the attack* before the knife can reach the centerline, or
- *Evade rearwards* and then jump back forwards as soon as the knife has passed.

The first option will always be preferred in *Krav Maga*, but it is not always practical. In order to be able to *explode forward*, you must identify the slash early. It is most suitable when the attack is energetic and passes through a large and clear chambering.

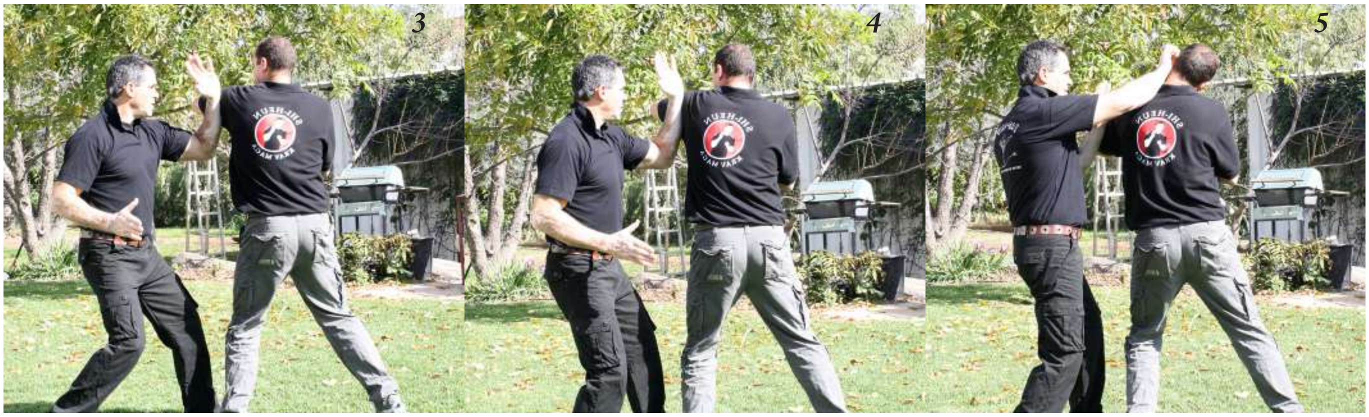
The second option of *back evasion* is very instinctive and suitable when the attack is too fast or too sudden. It is imperative to seriously drill the r*ebounding in a forward explosion* in order to counter safely. If you do not jump back forwards as soon as the knife has passed in front of you, you place yourself in a very dangerous defensive situation. The opponent will be able to keep attacking, and you will be on the defensive with no option to regain control of the fight! Remember that your attacker will always be able to run faster forward than you'll be able to flee backwards!

Before drilling defenses against slashing attacks, it is imperative to drill those two options with a partner. Drill the preemptive jump-in, and especially drill the aggressive rebound forward after a back evasion.
Once you have mastered these moves, and only then, you can start drilling the techniques presented below that use either of those openings.

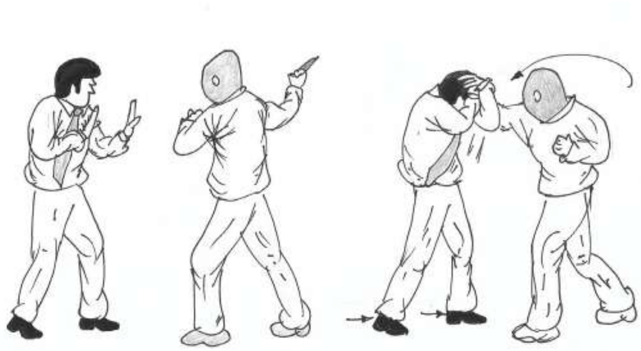
And first comes the Photo series at the top of next page that illustrates the "**let the knife pass and jump back in to control said knife**".



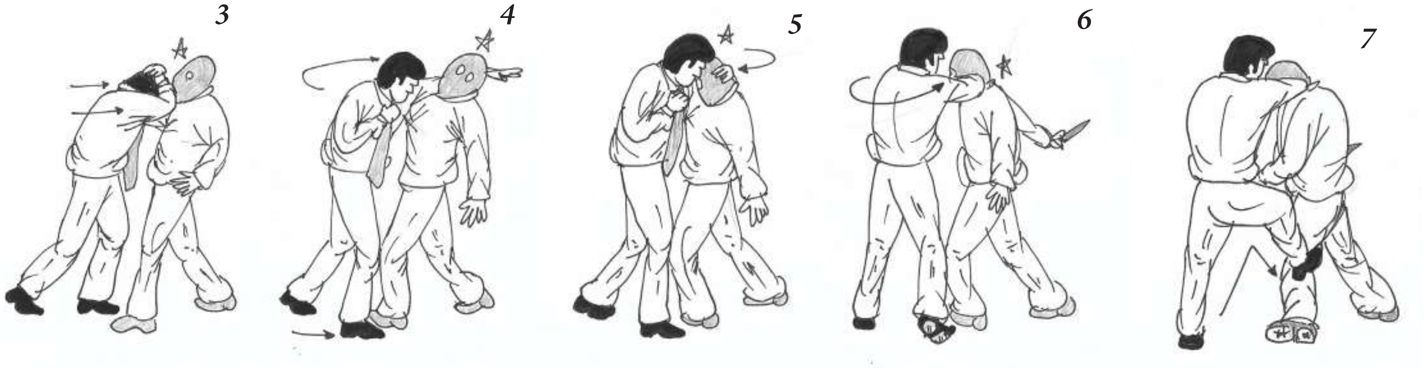
Evade the slash back and jump in with a block and Palm Strike



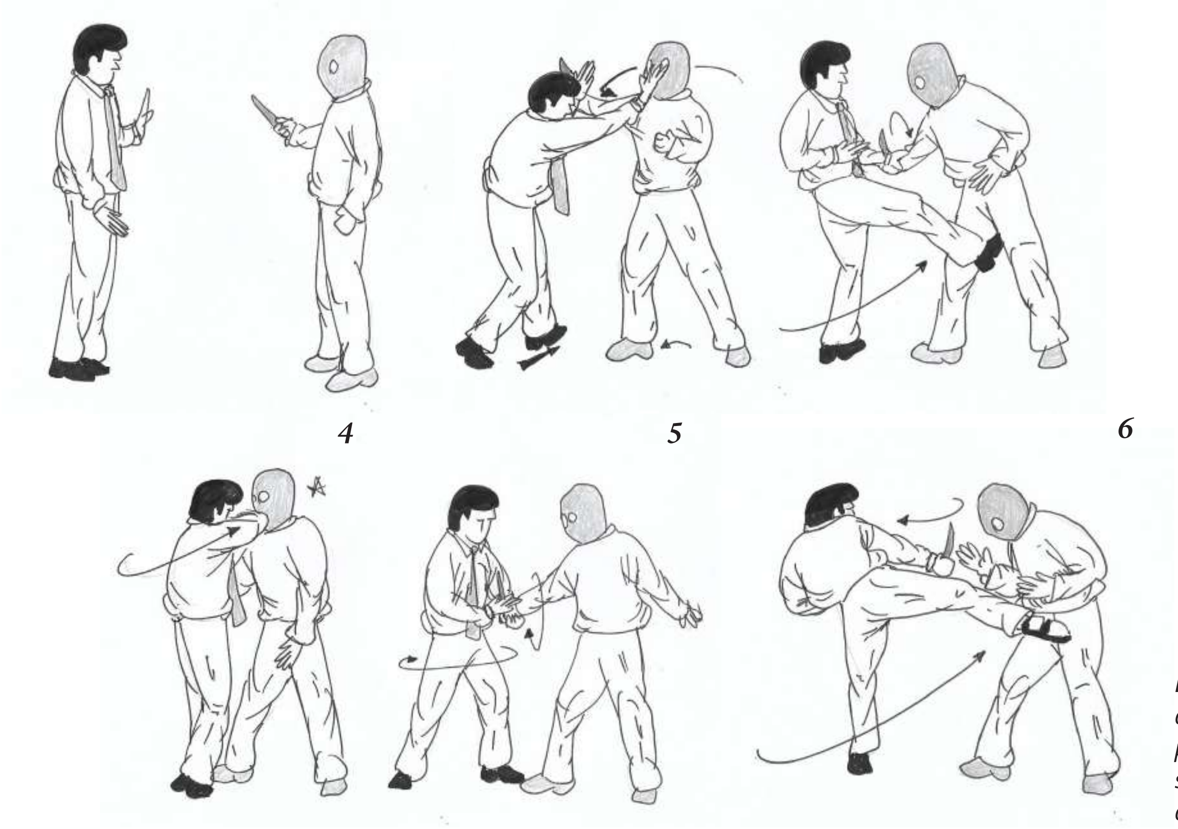
The second option is illustrated by the following Drawings. You 'helmet' your head for protection and *explode forward before the knife can get to its median axis*. The attacker does not expect this and will hit you with the forearm as you keep going with your forward momentum to crash into his face with your protective elbows. Keep the forward push with a Forearm Strike to the side of his neck that will turn into a hard catch as you headbutt him. Put your hips into the subsequent Circular Elbow Strike and stomp the back of his knee.



Jump preemptively into a well detected slash and crash into him with arms and head; keep striking



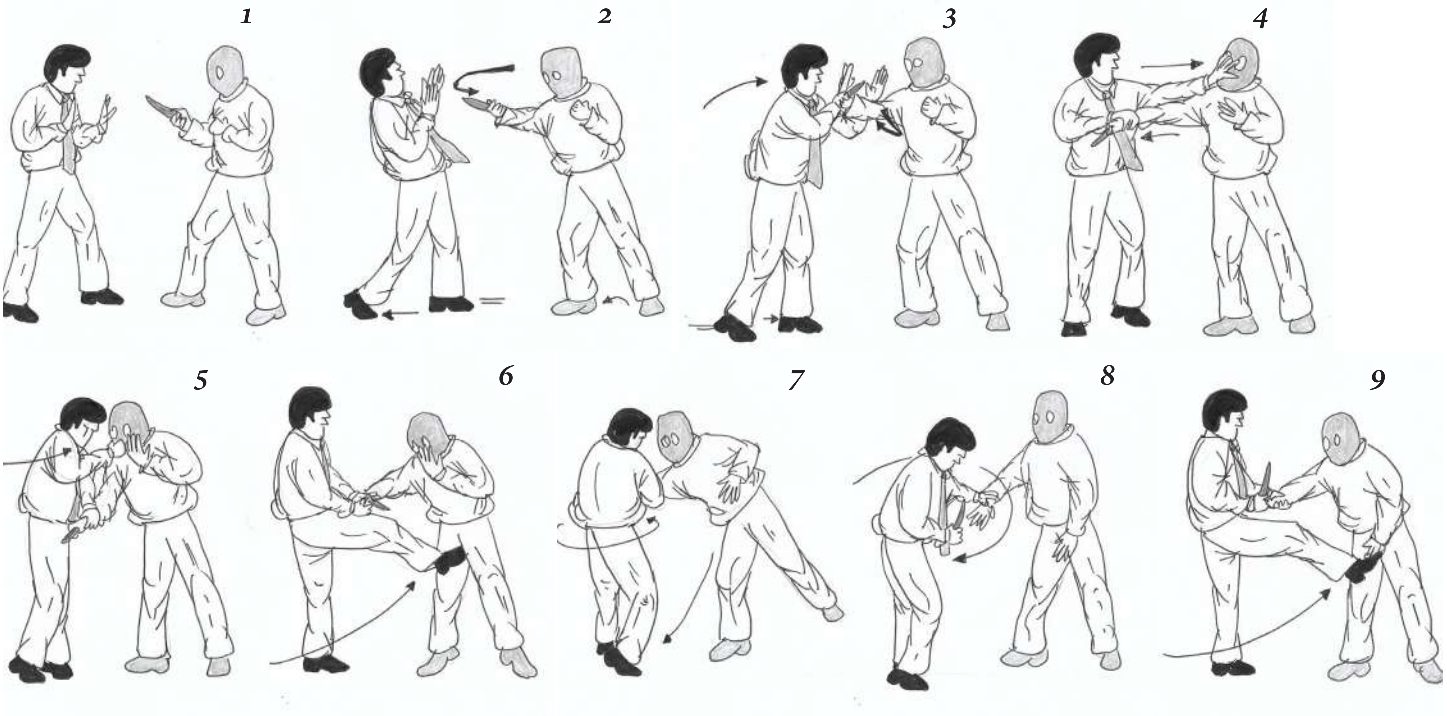
Of course, instead of a forward crash with your head protected by your elbows, you could also simply **lunge forward with a classic block** of the incoming arm. The preferred option should then be a grabbing block with simultaneous Eye Strike. You should then twist the grabbed wrist while kicking his groin, and conclude with a hip-propelled Circular Elbow Strike to the side of the head. The attacker should now be sufficiently softened for a Lock to Disarm maneuver. Start the subsequent *Retzev* with a Small Groin Roundhouse Kick.



Lunge forward with a block and eye poke; grab, kick, strike, lock, disarm and kick

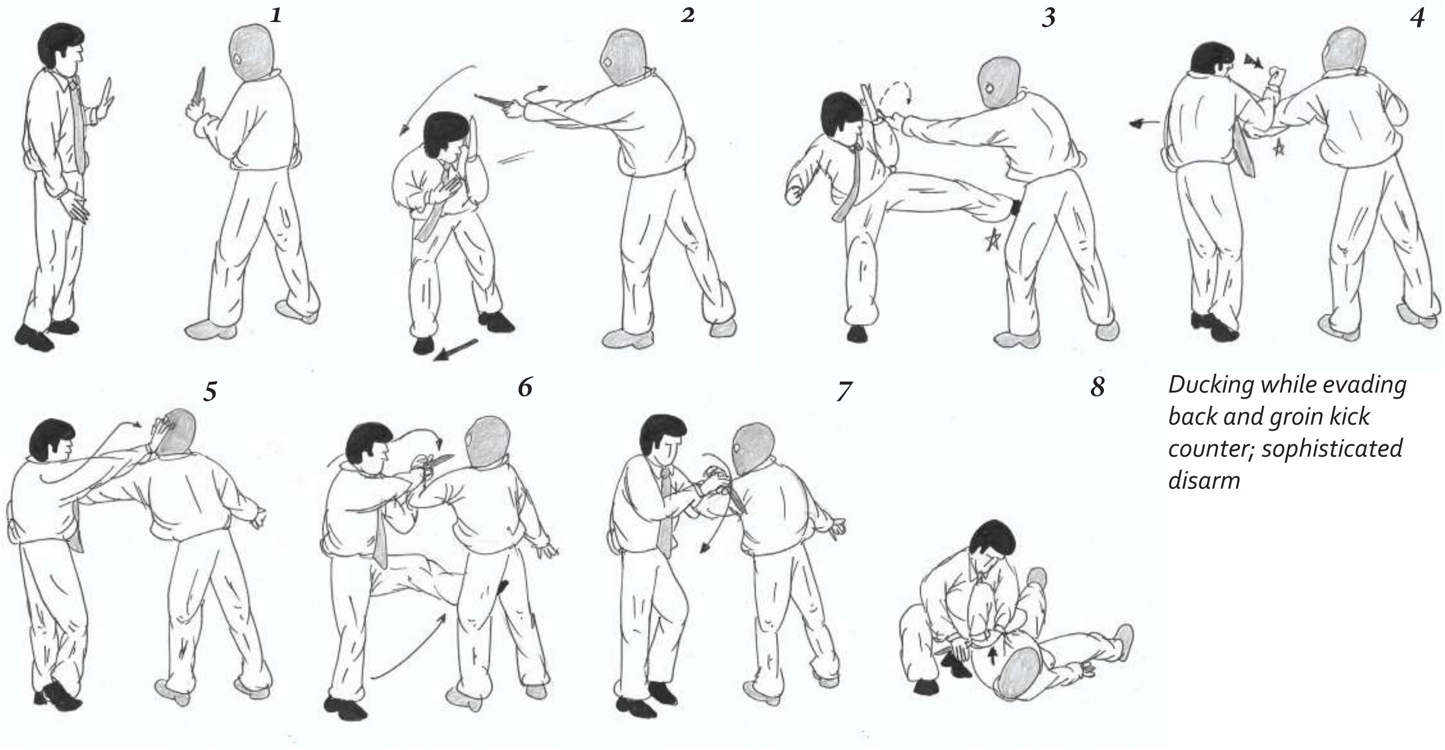
If you have to evade rearwards because you have been surprised, it is imperative to jump back forward immediately. This has been underlined before. A regular Inward Slash will usually be followed by a Backhand Outward one: it is a completely natural combination that happens even without being planned by the attacker. To avoid being put on the defensive and lose the control of the fight, you must interrupt this 'double' slash by lunging with a block in between. The Illustrations at the top of next page show how to do that with a lunge that stops the backhand return at its very beginning. Block and grab the armed wrist while striking the eyes. Switch grabbing hands and punch the attacker's nose. Kick his groin while setting up the Lock position. Disarm and kick the groin again as the start of your finishing moves.

➤



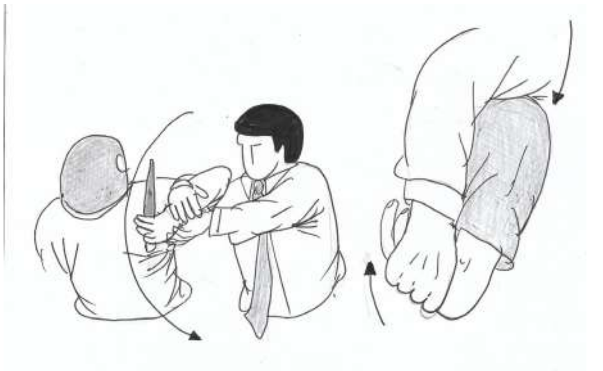
After an instinctive rear evasion, it is imperative to jump back forward immediately to prevent a 'return' slashing move; block, grab, poke, kick, strike lock and disarm

There is a **little variation of the back evasion** that can also be instinctive: bending down under the trajectory of the slash while going back as well. What follows stays the same though: jump back forward to block the arm that has just passed you. The example illustrated below also shows a more sophisticated lock and disarm; remember that these techniques must be drilled only after having mastered the simpler defenses.



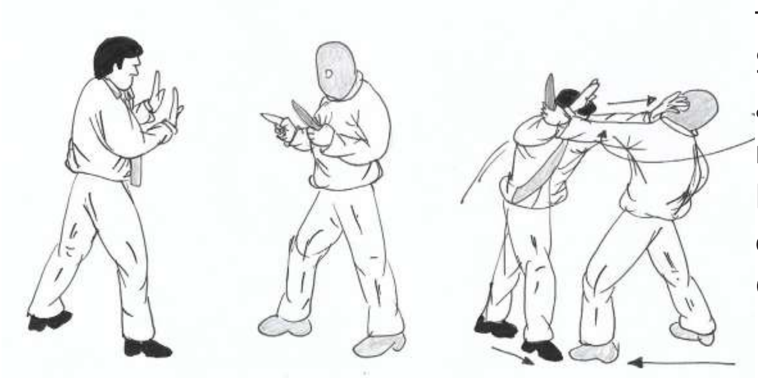
Ducking while evading back and groin kick counter; sophisticated disarm

The Drawings at the bottom of the previous page show how to bend low and away under a slash and then rebound forward with a groin Roundhouse. The hand is ready to block a return of the slash and then grabs the armed wrist. *Use the hips and the whole body* for an elbow break of the caught armed arm. Strike the eyes to allow for the set-up of a locking grip and further soften him with a groin kick. Get him to the groin with a violent Armlock (Based on Aikido's *Shiho Nage*) and disarm him by locking his wrist (his elbow is stuck under your arm). The Illustrations make all this clearer.

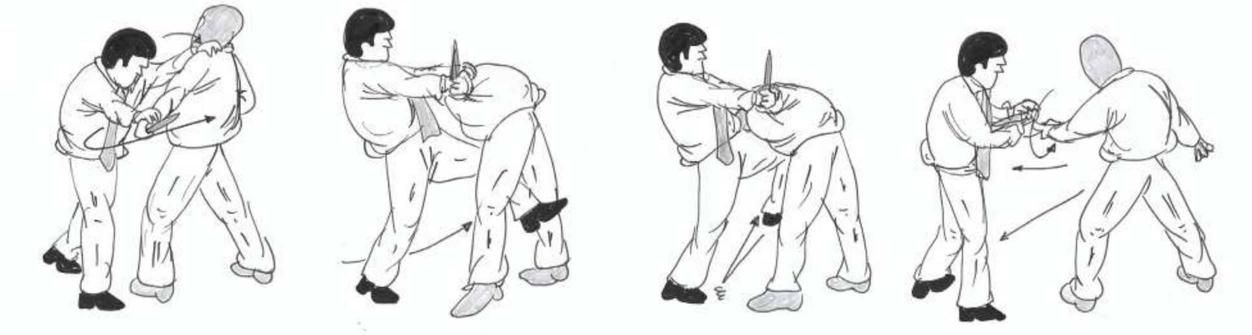


Details of the lock - figures 7 and 8 of previous page

The classic Disarm is therefore illustrated again in the next set of Photos, in a move starting with the *preemptive forward lunge and block*. You explode forward before the slash can develop and block while striking his eyes. Grab the armed wrist and the shoulder to pull him in into a Groin Kick or Groin Shin Kick. Let the kicking foot rebound for a Knee Strike to the ribs or head. You can now twist the grabbed arm to go for the Lock and Disarm; he should be stunned enough. Start the finishing moves with a Groin Roundhouse.

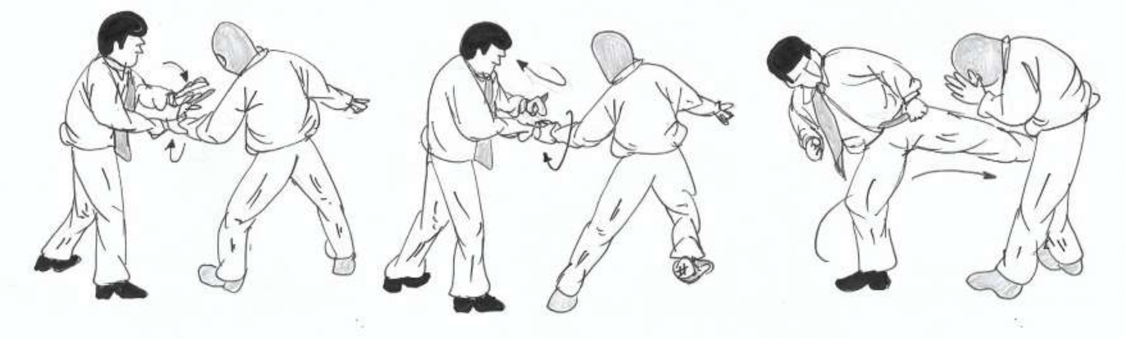


3 4 5 6

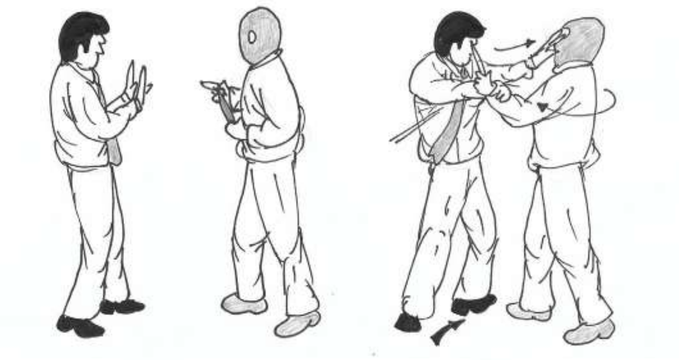


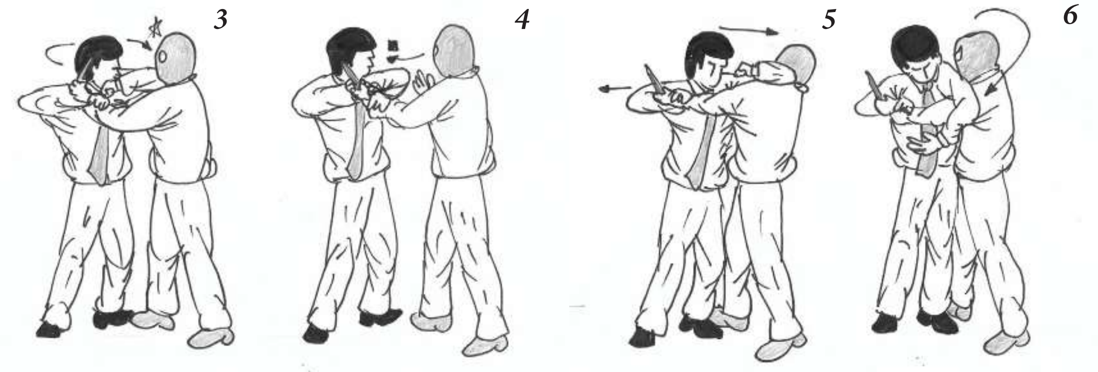
Go forward with a Block and an Eye Poke and strike to prepare a classic Lock & Disarm

7 8 9

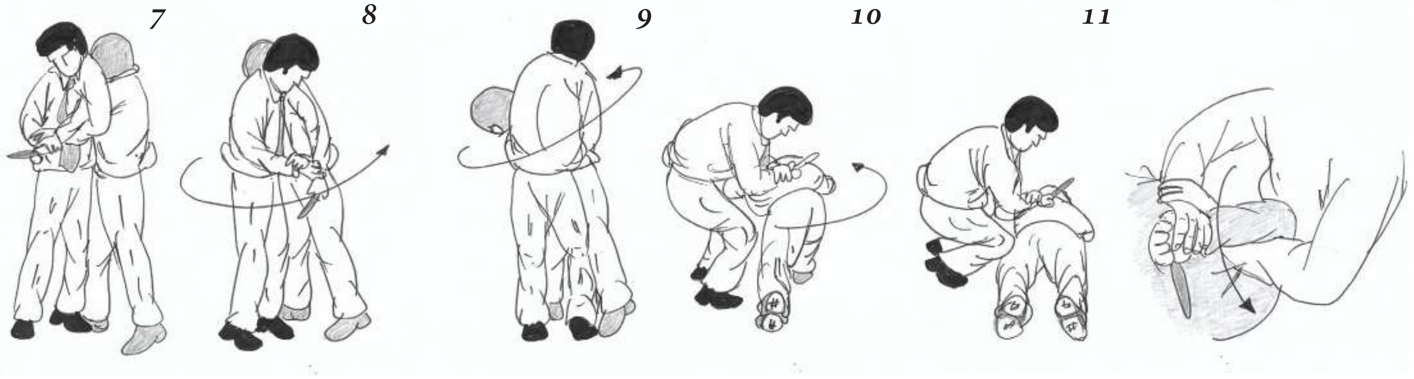


A more sophisticated Lock that needs drilling is now presented in the same reaction to the classic slash. You lunge diagonally forward while blocking and striking the eyes. Grab the armed wrist while keeping the forward momentum for a Double Elbow Strike to the head: Circular Inwards and then natural return in Lateral Outwards. For both strikes, you pull him in by the grabbed arm and that will place you in perfect position to envelop his arm from above and set up a Figure Four Wrist Lock. Using *the strength of your whole body and both arms against his one arm*, it will be easy to twist around him and place him in a Back Shoulder Lock. Keep twisting and get him on the floor by *violent* pressure of the lock. Easy to disarm him there.

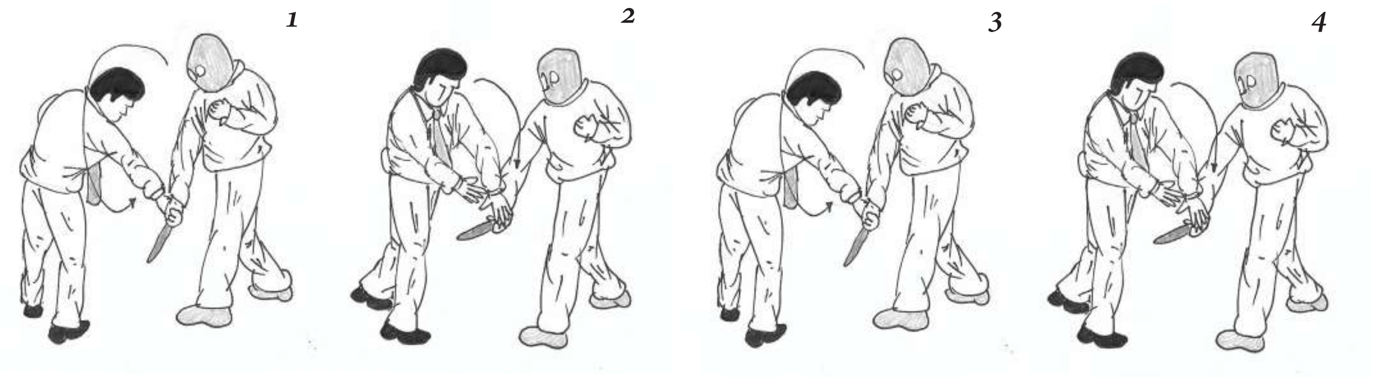


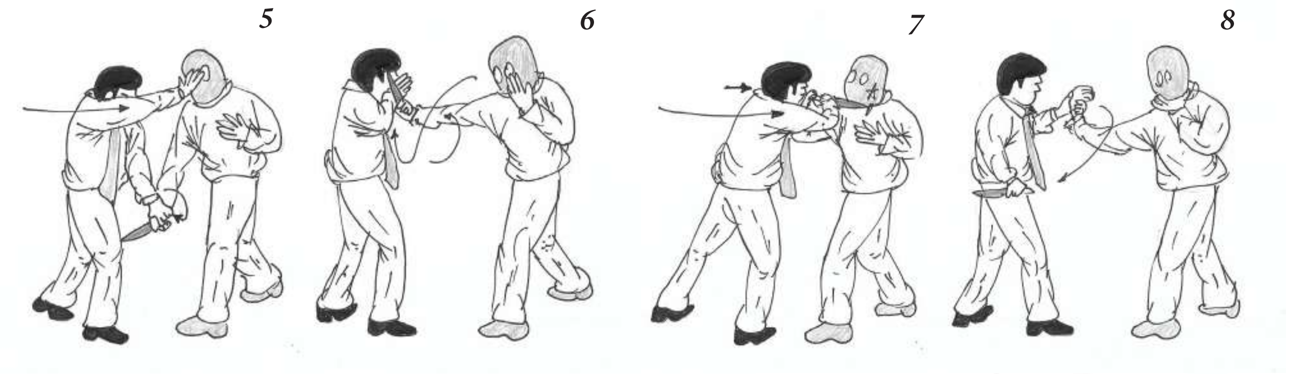


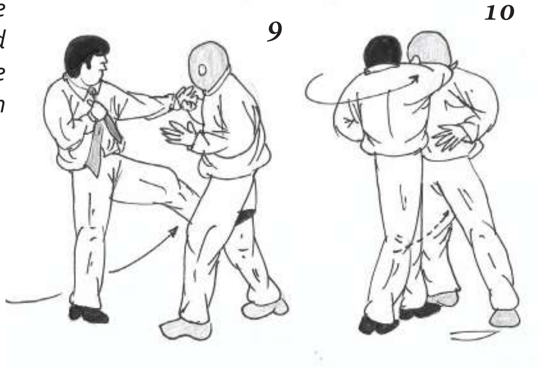
Forward Block and eye Poke and Elbow Strikes to allow the set up of a Figure-4 Armlock



And now for a "**Use his own knife against him**" defense. Start drilling this only after you have totally mastered the more classical techniques. As illustrated, you go forward to block the incoming slash and deviate the Strike down and around. Switch grabbing hands while striking the eyes. Twist his wrist and lift it up; come with the other hand on the back of his hand to reinforce the coming push. Use *all your body and both hands to push the knife towards his face* or neck. It will now be easy to disarm him and start a *Retzev*, for example with a Groin Kick and Elbow Strike.

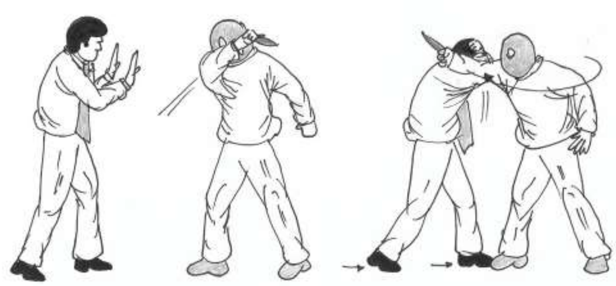




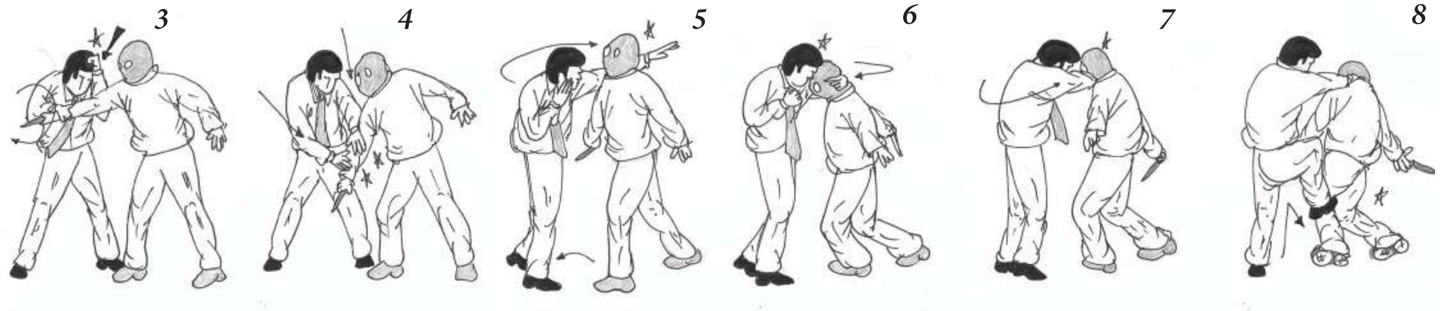


Go forward, block, lead the strike down and grab; strike the eyes and use both hands to push the knife towards him

If the slashing **attack starts with a Backhand Strike**, the jumping forward defense allows naturally for an easy arm break. The Drawings show how you can explode *diagonally forward* with the arms protecting your head and then grab the armed wrist to strike the extended elbow 'with all you have'.

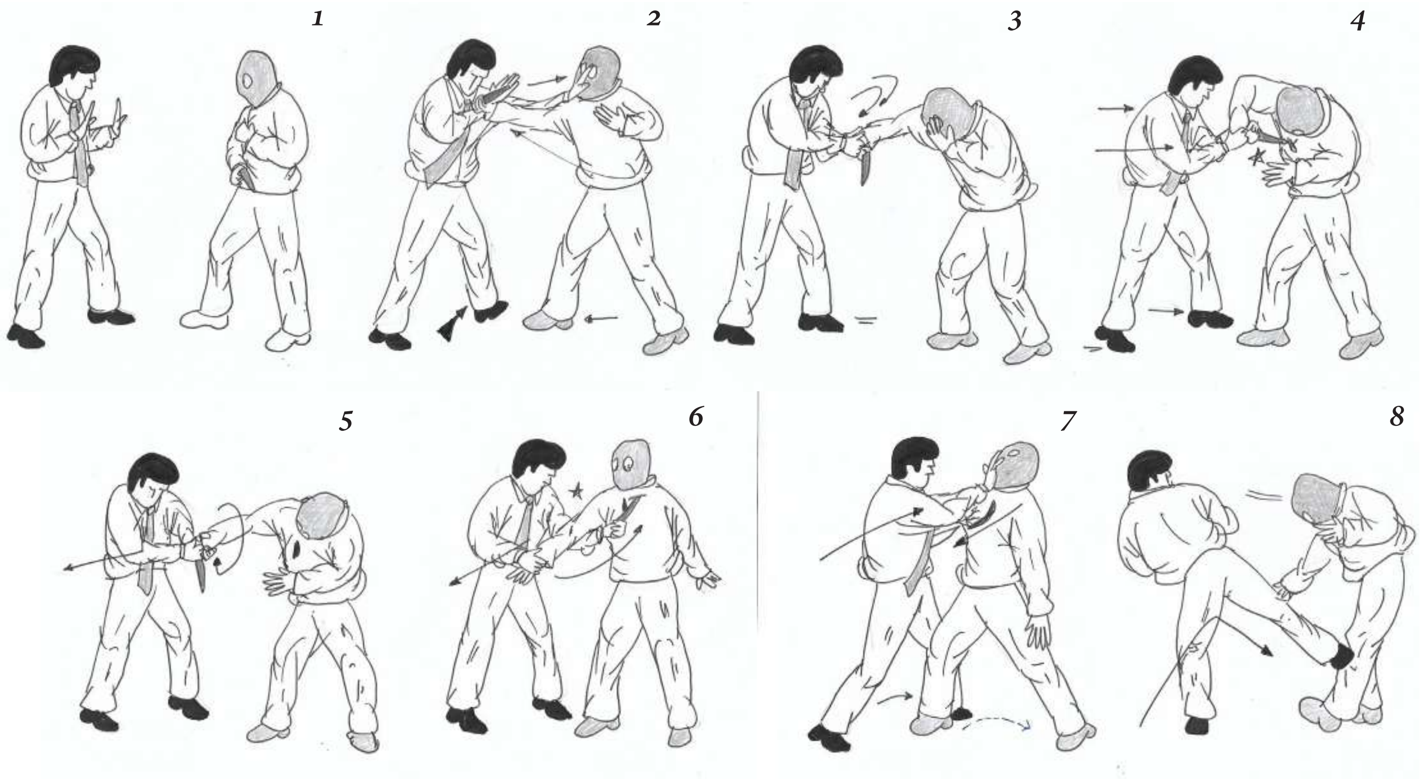


You can then strike the wounded arm down and away to open the attacker to a Forearm Strike to the side of the neck that will turn into a striking grab to the back of his neck that pulls his face onto your shoulder. An Elbow Strike and Knee Stomp should complete the series.



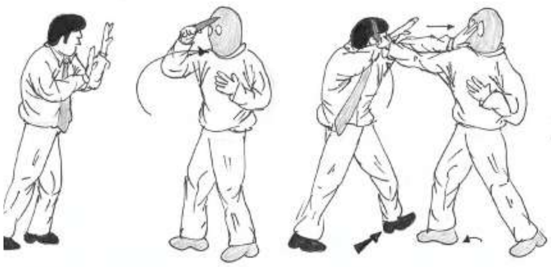
Against a backhand slash, jump diagonally forward and break the attacking elbow before starting a vicious Retzev

And now a "**Use his own Knife against him**" defense against a Backhand Slash. You lunge diagonally forward and block while poking the eyes. Immediately twist his armed wrist and grab it with both hands to push the knife *with all your body* towards his ribs. Pull the wrist back and twist it more to allow for a Disarm. Use his knife to poke his chest and pull it back across and under his arm in a (light) slash of your own. Palm-strike his chin and stomp kick his knee joint. Keep at it if necessary.

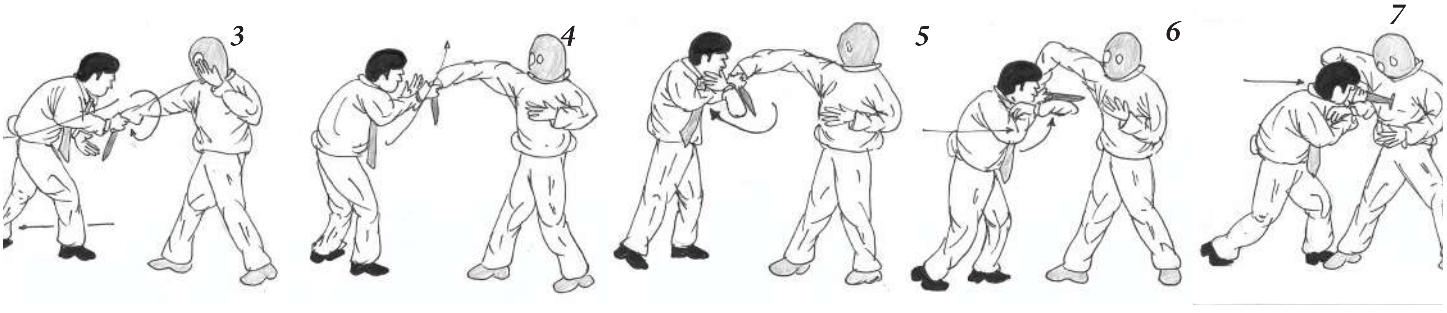


'Use his own knife against him' series against a Backhand Slash

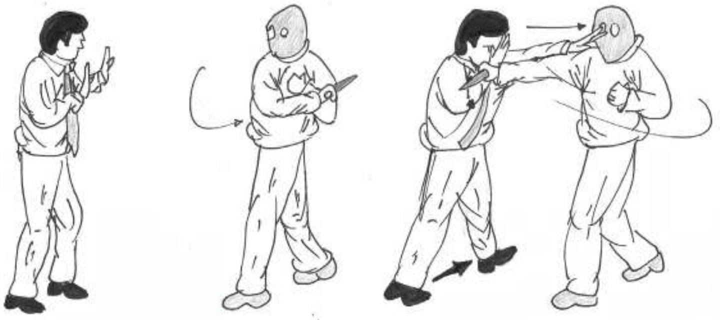
Another less bloody version is presented in the Drawings below. You will again go diagonally forward for a Grabbing Block and Eye Attack. Twist his arm into single handed classic Wrist Lock position and use your other arm to reinforce the wrist grab and the push towards his ribs. The position of the reinforcing elbow allows for a more powerful push into the ribs.

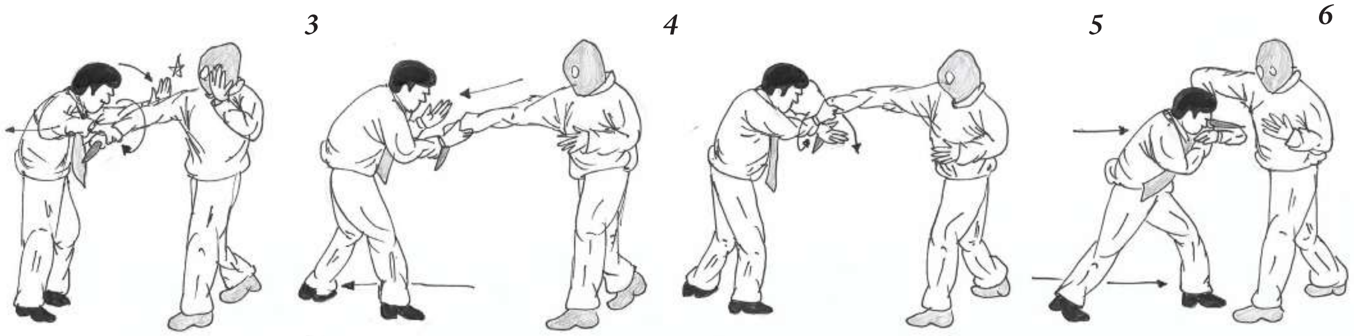


Another 'Use his Knife against him' defense against a Backhand Strike

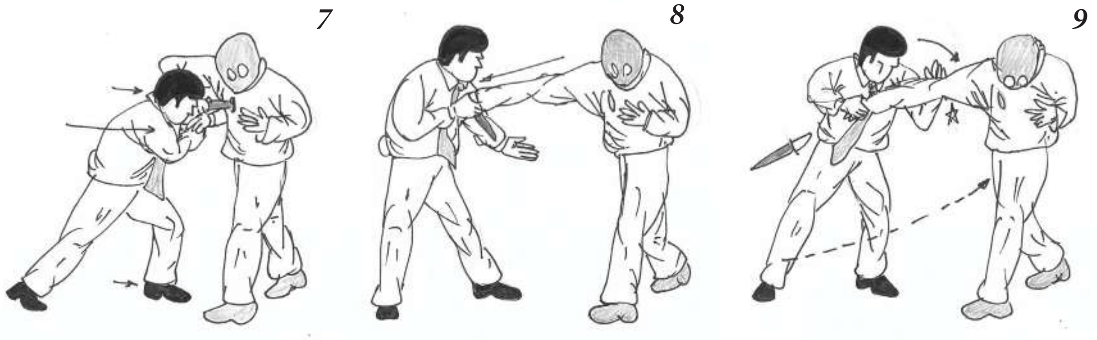


The next set of Drawings illustrates an **'Arm-break Disarm'** after having poked the slashing assailant with his own knife. Drill all possibilities seriously, and then let your body choose intuitively in free-fighting which is most suitable. In our example, you lunge *forward diagonally* while blocking the backhand slash and while poking the attacker's eyes. Pull the arm to extend it and palm-strike his elbow to weaken it. Pull it further and place your other hand on the back of his hand as illustrated. You can now use *both hands and all your body* for a sudden and *violent* push of the knife towards his ribs. Pull the knife back after contact and extend it for another hard Palm Strike to the elbow for disarming him; after being poked by his own knife, he'll probably be much keener on letting go.

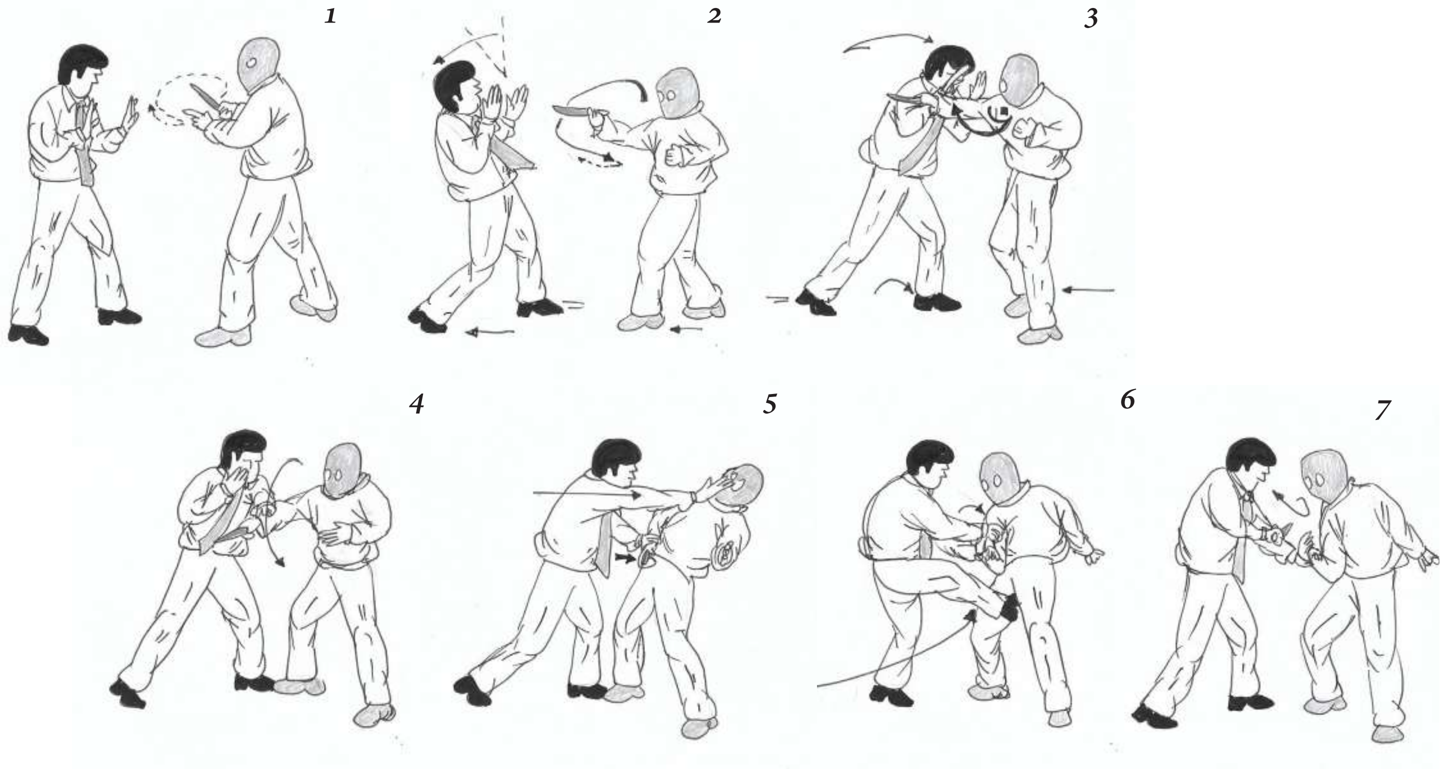


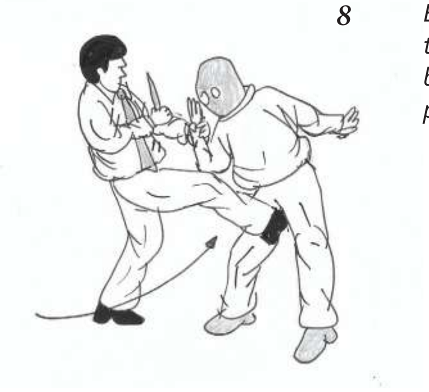


Strike the elbow, use his knife against him, strike the elbow



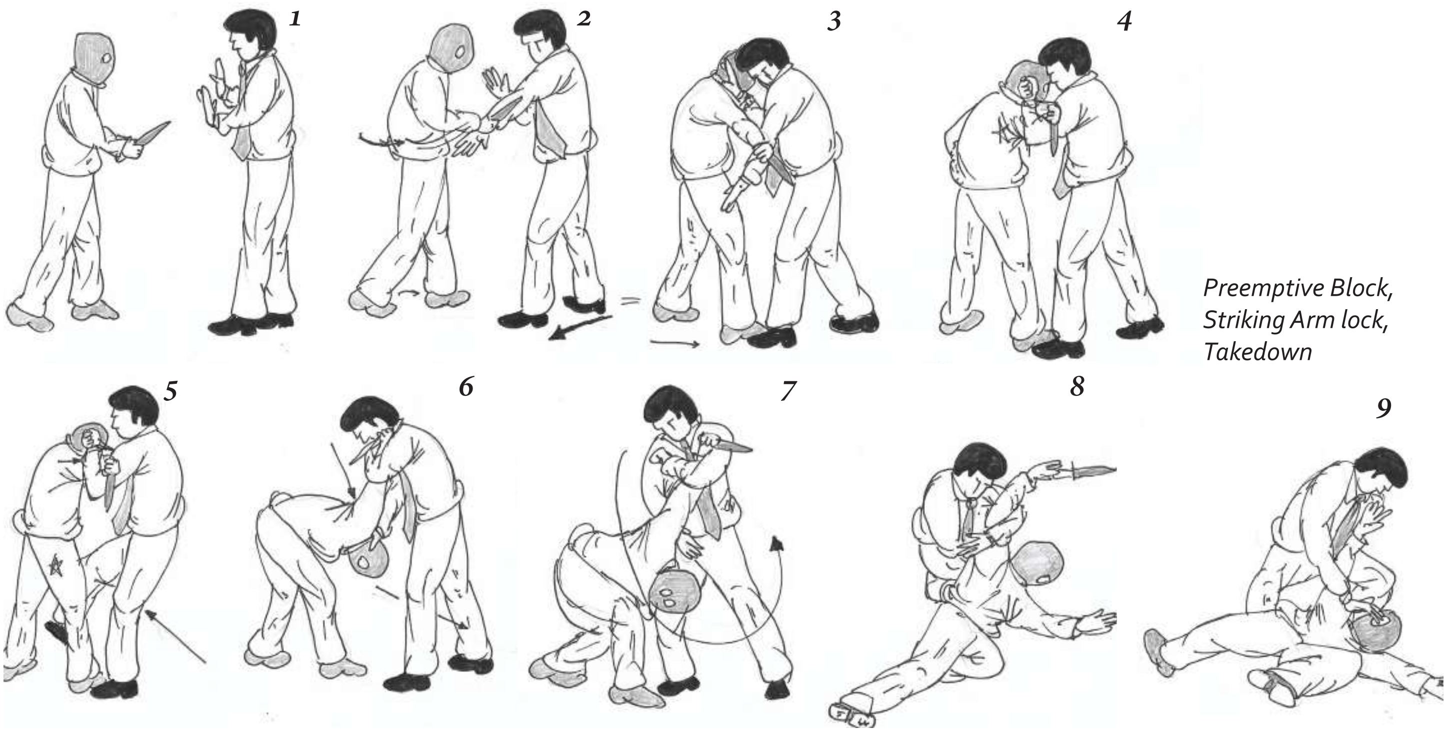
But *not always will you be able to jump forward before the slash*. We now present a **back-evasion Disarm** series against a clear and full Double slash, in and out. This is, of course, valid against a single simple Reverse (backhand) Slash as well. Evade back instinctively a regular slash that has come too fast for a forward move. *But you will lunge back forward as soon as the knife has passed in front of you*. Block the return backhand strike with both arms. Immediately lower the armed arm and push it towards the attacker's body with all the power of your forward momentum. Simultaneously you will poke his eyes as he concentrates on his armed wrist. Kick his groin to allow for an easier grabbing of his armed hand in Lock grip. Peel his knife off and kick him again in the groin.





Evade back but come back forward to push the slashing hand towards the slasher's body while poking his eyes; then, you can proceed with the classic disarm

We shall conclude this Chapter with a **sophisticated** technique against an **early low regular slash**. Do not start drilling this before you are an advanced practitioner able to defend himself with simpler techniques. Mastery comes gradually! In our example, the attacker starts low with a regular slash. You lunge forward preemptively and block him low (classic Downward Block). You keep your forward momentum to come close and lift his arm. Strike a painful armlock with the blocking forearm on his elbow as his hand is stuck on your upper arm. *Strike* the elbow *violently* and join hands over his arm for the subsequent Lock. This will keep him in place for a groin Kick or Knee. As he bends in pain, strike his back neck and then push it down and under his shoulder. Pull his arm in the same circular motion to bring him to the floor. *Bang his head on the floor* and put your fingers in his eyes.



Preemptive Block, Striking Arm lock, Takedown

SHI-HEUN KRAV-MAGA SELF-DEFENSE

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.
~Albert Einstein

PART Nine

Defenses against Gun Threats

הגנה מפני איומי אקדח

Everything we have ever said about ‘choosing not to fight’ is even truer in an altercation involving firearms. Even the densest of persons will understand that using a finger to squeeze a trigger is easier and faster than any self defense technique imaginable. Relinquish your wallet or anything of value, if it is what the threat is about. **No material wealth is worth putting your life on the line**.

Of course, if it is also clear that, if nothing will save you or a loved one from execution, kidnapping, serious bodily harm or sexual attack, you should consider resisting. The problem is that no Hollywood stunt will help you **if you are not close** to the assailant. A gun is a weapon to be used from a distance and an experimented thug will not let you get close enough to do anything. Forget James Bond from the Seventies movies that could kick a gun out of the villain’s fingers. From some distance, it would be imperative to weasel your way closer in a subdued and totally non-threatening manner.

The good news is that a gun threat is a *threat* and not an attack; if the attacker wanted, he would have shot you already and easily. He wants something from you and he could be cocky or stupid enough to come close to you or let you approach. You could get close by offering your wallet, or he could be inclined to touch you with the gun barrel to intimidate you (also an Hollywood favorite).

If you find yourself in a situation where you are threatened by contact with a gun, then there certainly is hope. Many readers will be surprised to learn that taking the initiative in this situation is pretty safe and easy. The only caveat is the danger of collateral damage posed to eventual onlookers; and it is to be taken into account.

The reader should first convince himself that, with a little training, one can easily shift a gun touching him before the assailant can pull the trigger. It may seem surprising or counter-intuitive. Just try with a toy gun; have a partner hold you at gun point with your hands up. Simply twist and deviate the gun with one hand; your partner is supposed to shoot as soon as he discerns your exploding into the move. Believe it and check by yourself: you’ll win each time because you are the one taking the initiative. This is what all gun threat techniques are about. The problem is that it works only if you are very very close and it will not be possible against a professional attacker.

The other little piece of good news is that once you have started your defense, the disarming of the assailant is pretty easy too. Think about the fulcrum you have when holding the attacker’s wrist and the barrel of the gun: it is long and around the axis of one finger into the trigger guard. Twisting the gun will be easy and will also break the trigger finger. Pulling the gun away after that will be child’s play.

In a nutshell: dealing with a gun is exceedingly dangerous to you and to your surroundings; it should be avoided at any cost. But if you have no choice and are “lucky” enough to be threatened from close up, taking the initiative *Krav Maga*-style will probably give you more than a fighting chance.

9.1 Body evasion and Disarming

Unlike dealing with sticks and knives, **gun threats** can only be dealt with by disarming the assailant. The effort needed to squeeze a trigger is so minimal, that anything else will keep you in danger. All the self defense techniques presented will be about *taking the gun away* from the attacker. Eventual strikes are only complementary moves to help or to conclude the disarming technique.
As mentioned, taking a gun out of the opponent's hand is basically very easy: you make use of the fulcrum between the end of the barrel and the opponent's wrist or even grip. And you make use of the searing pain of the trigger finger joints being violently damaged. All disarming techniques will therefore be based on the following simple scenario: (1) you move the armed wrist so as to get out of the line of fire, (2) you catch the barrel of the gun with one hand and the armed wrist with the other, (3) you twist the gun violently around the axis of the trigger (in a way that does not place you in the line of fire at any time), (4) you pull the gun away.
And then comes the following: you are now in possession of the attacker's firearm; *what is to be done?*

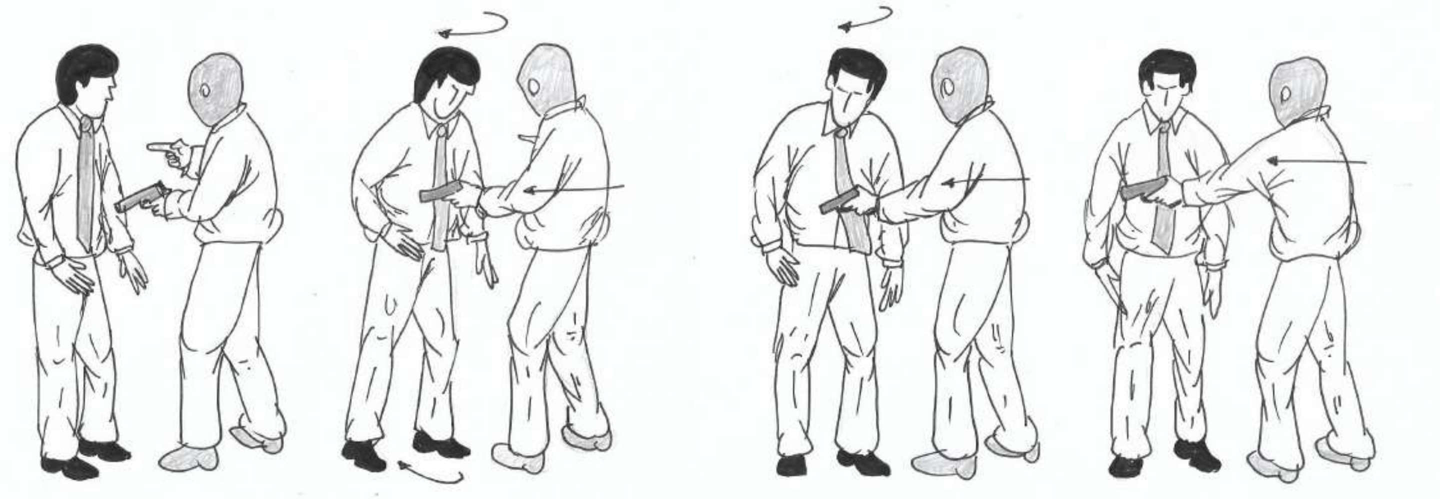
Here are the golden rules when holding a gun:

1. **Do not make the attacker's mistake of staying close**: immediately retreat (or push him away) to keep about 10 feet (or 3 meters) between you and him. A handgun advantage is at mid-distance, not for close or for very far.
2. **Do not threaten anyone with a gun if you are not ready to use it**; for example, shooting at his lower limbs in case he gets closer or tries to attack you again. Having a gun can give you *a sense of false security* and slow your reactions if you are not ready to use it. Remember that it could be taken away from you too and then place you in jeopardy.
3. **Do not threaten anyone with a gun if you do not know how to use it**. Unless the gun is a revolver that just requires to pull the trigger, you may need knowledge to be able to get a discharge. Automatic guns come with various safety features and require arming before you can shoot (getting a bullet into the chamber). Moreover, unlike in Hollywood, guns often jam and clearing a jammed gun in real time is a skill you only can get by good instruction and practice. If you are not familiar with a gun or not willing to use it, it is best to get rid of it (throwing it far away), to run away with it or to place in your pants or pockets before using *Krav Maga* to completely subdue the attacker (**crushing his fingers and wrists** would help ensure his inability to further threaten you).

➡

Before we consider the Disarming Techniques, we should also present a very important exercise to be drilled seriously. Getting out of the line of fire will always be based on **two** components: move the armed hand AND removing yourself simultaneously. This can be ingrained by the following drill.

Have a partner poke you with a gun (Poking someone with a gun is also Hollywood-derived; it is totally stupid and unprofessional). He can poke you anywhere: in the gut, in the chest, on any side, on left or right shoulder. Your job is to 'give in' fast and remove the intended target from the poke *and the line of fire* by twisting your body. Do not grab the gun hand; this drill is there to ingrain the need to pivot with the body. All full defenses to be drilled later will have a natural component of twisting evasion together with the gun grab to deviate it. It is common sense but it requires getting used to.



Drill the necessary body twist evasion that complements all defense techniques

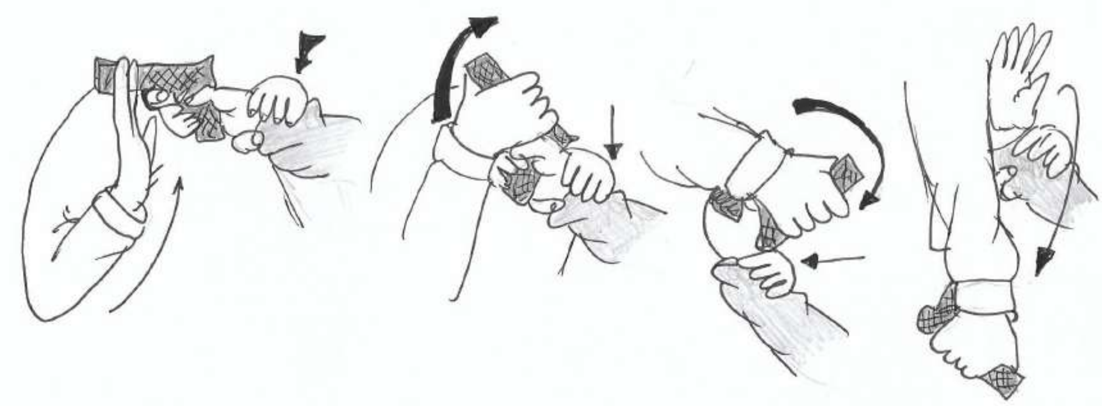
We shall now present the **basic Disarming Techniques** that you should drill first to get familiar with the principles of disarming a gun-holder. Drill those slowly and smoothly with a partner who *keeps his finger out of the trigger*. Increase speed gradually but drill carefully so as not to hurt your partner's joints. Later in the text, some defenses will be presented where the more advanced disarming is different. The principles stay the same and must be first mastered by the techniques we are presenting now!

Maybe needless to add, but we shall say it anyway: **Never practice with a loaded gun!** It is best to use a fake gun, but if unavailable use only an unloaded gun that has been checked at least twice for its absence of bullet in chamber and in magazine; all munitions should, at that time, be under lock and key, far away, to avoid any possible miscommunication. This cannot be underlined enough!!

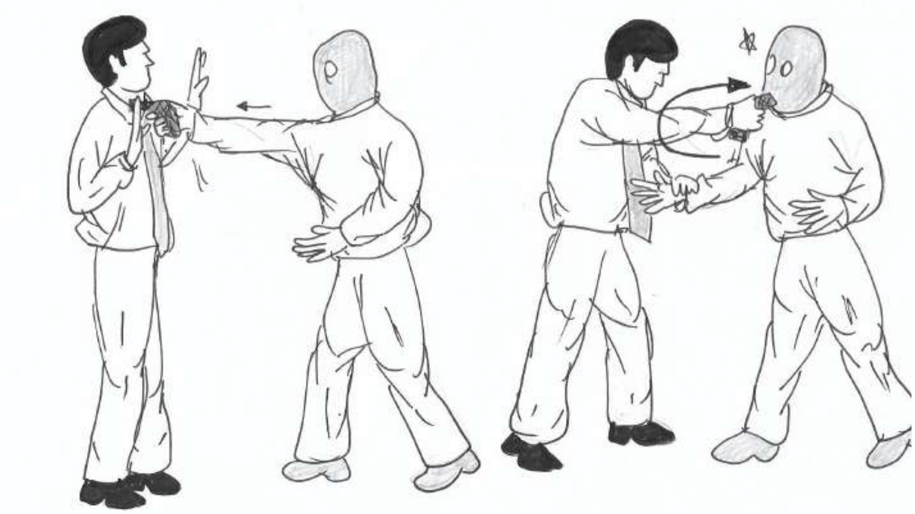
➡

The first Disarm we shall present is **the Vertical Disarm**. We present it first because it should be used whenever possible, on account of lifting the line of fire towards the sky during the technique. This has the advantage of minimizing possible collateral damage during the Disarm. Remember to also remove yourself from the line of fire during the grab. **The Vertical Disarm** is based on grabbing the barrel from below and grabbing the wrist. You can then lift the barrel to make it pivot around the trigger area, while keeping the wrist in place. Do this *violently* and you will break the opponent's trigger finger while disarming him. You should then strike the attacker in the face with the gun in line with the natural continuation of the Disarm movement. *Remember to immediately retreat* to keep him in check with his own gun from 3 meters at least.

The Figures illustrate the Disarm and present an applied example.



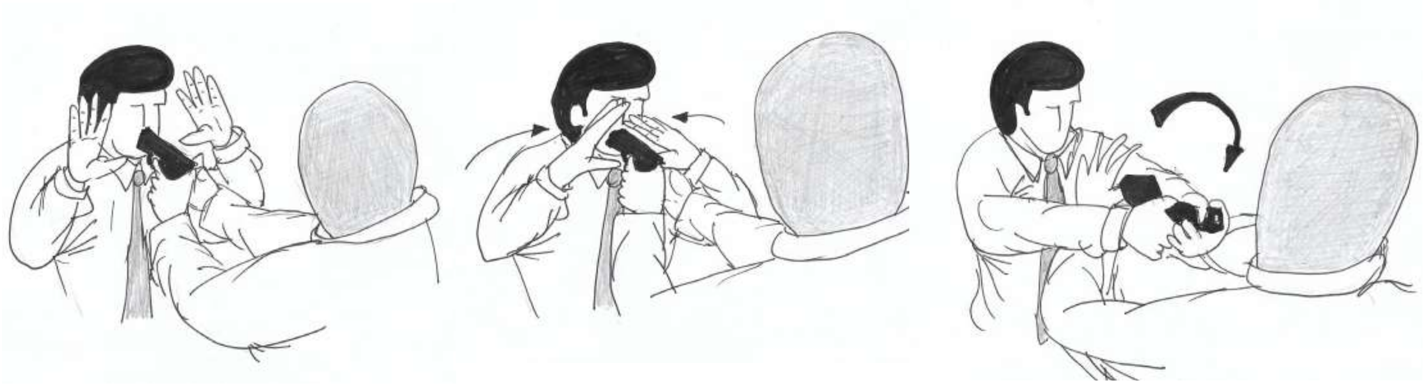
The Vertical Disarm: safest for standers-by



Vertical Disarm against close high front gun threat

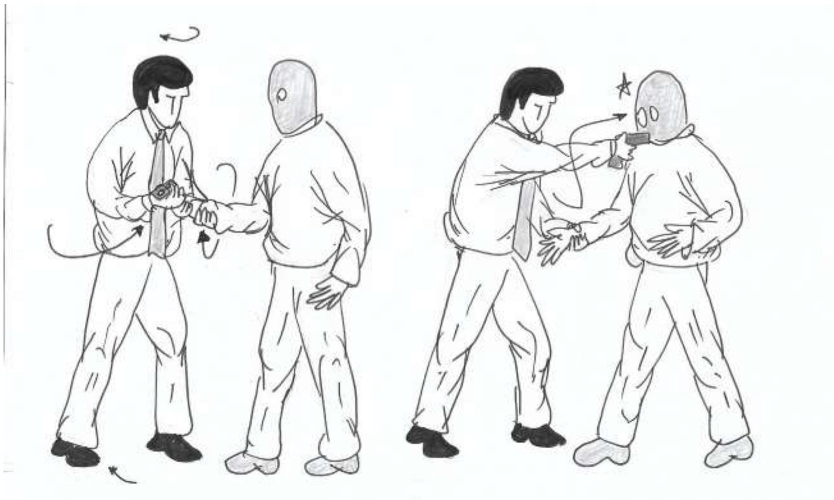
We shall also present a **variation of the Vertical Disarm** that illustrate that it is the principles that matter and that there is no dogmatic way to follow. The Application illustrated at the top of next page is especially useful in a situation where the gun is '*in your face'* and you are also grabbed by the assailant. Lift your hands near your face in a non-threatening way: you are clearly surrendering in fear. From close-up, you can now explosively grab the barrel of the gun *with both hands* and *violently* lift it in place around the trigger area! Make sure you pivot around the trigger that should be stuck in place by your move.

➔

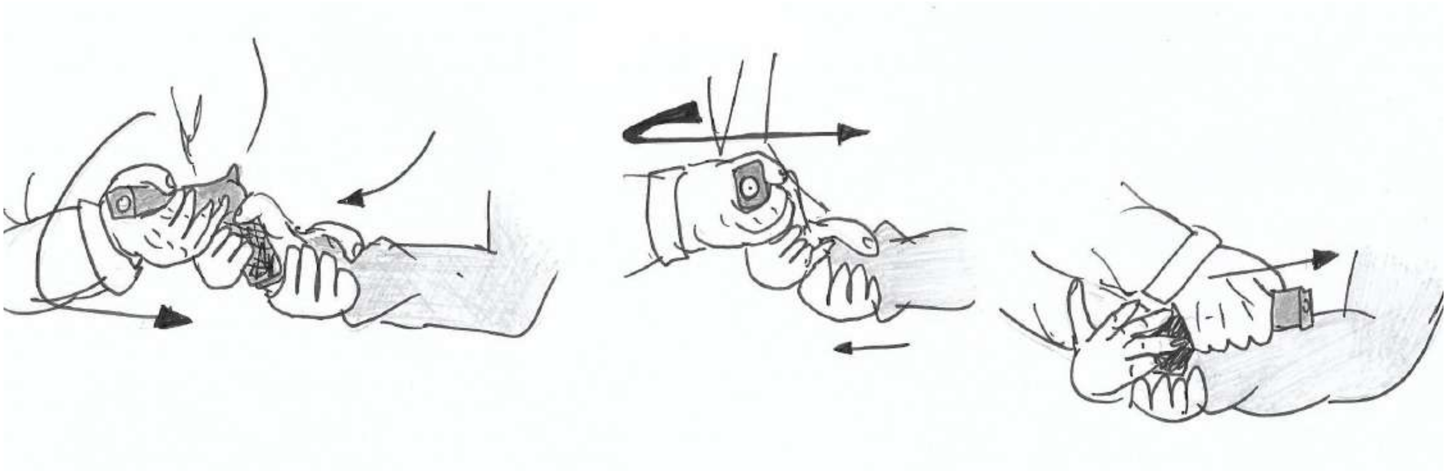


A variation of the Vertical Disarm

The Second Disarm is **the Lateral Disarm**, based on the same principles. You grab the barrel and the wrist and then push the barrel *horizontally* back towards the opponent. This move also pushes the palm of his hand towards his forearm, which has the advantage of causing his fingers to open naturally. But, of course, you execute the push *violently* in order to break his trigger finger, while pulling his wrist towards you. As soon as he lets go of the gun you push it forward with the momentum to hit him in the face with it. You should then immediately take your distance, eventually after a groin Kick or groin Knee if you are in control.

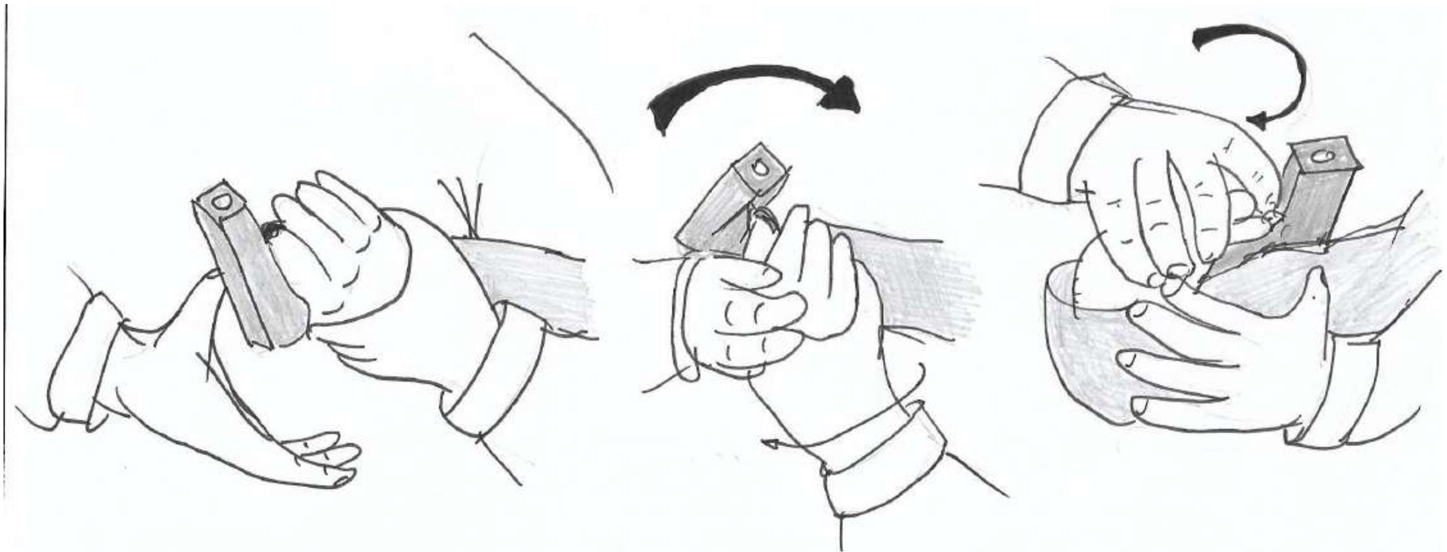


Applied Lateral Disarm against gut-level close front gun threat



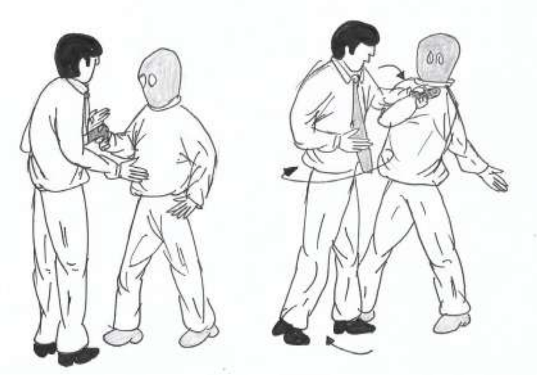
The very common Lateral Disarm, horizontal version of the previous technique

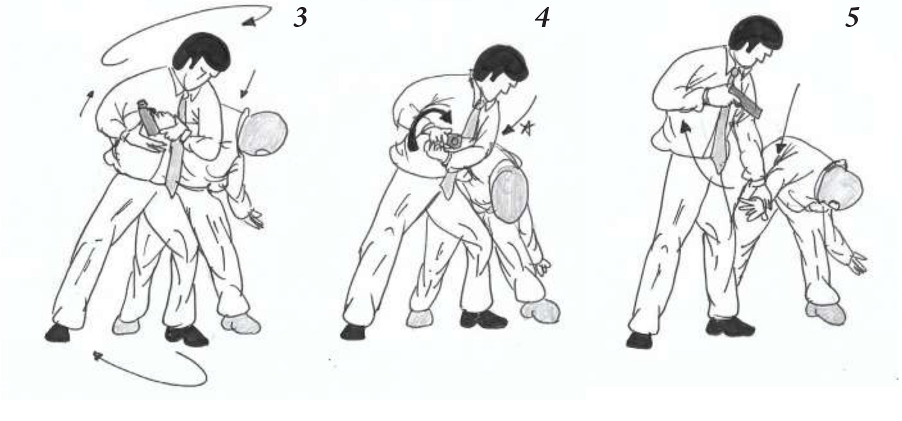
The Third Disarm, **the Corkscrew Disarm**, is very efficient but it requires a special control of the opponent's arm. It is very useful when you find yourself in a wrestling tug-of-war for the gun with the opponent. Again, you grab the barrel and the wrist, but this time you *twist the gun on itself around the trigger*. The violent twist will both damage the trigger finger and make him release the gun. Regarding the necessary set-up to execute the Disarm, the following example will make things clear.



The Corkscrew Disarm, easy to understand

Our application for a **Corkscrew Disarm** is illustrated by the Drawings below. Your attacker threatens you with a gun touching your chest. Lift your hands in a clear and well-understood sign of surrender. Once you have broken inertia and are in movement, grab his wrist and push it away and towards him while twisting out of the line of fire. Keep pivoting in order to place him in classic armlock *under your armpit*. *Use all your body to get in position and strike his arm violently with the armpit*. Immediately grab the gun barrel and execute the **Corkscrew Disarm** while pushing even more on his arm joints. Take the gun and take your distance.





Applied Corkscrew Disarm in classic Armlock position

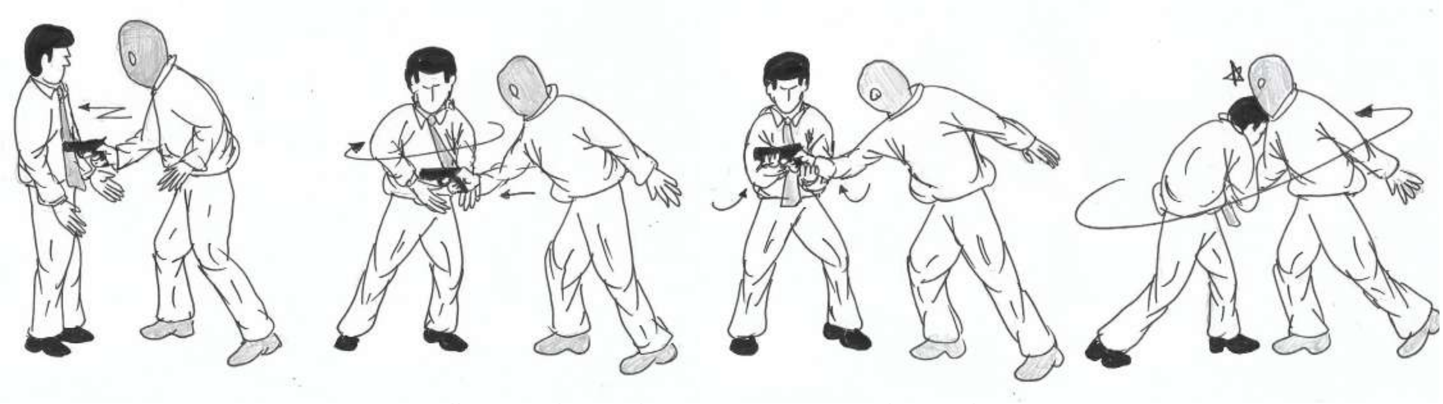
All other *Disarm Techniques* are variations of those just presented and are based on the same guiding principles. A few more advanced techniques will be presented later on with a different approach, but they should be reserved for advanced trainees with a full mastery of the basic techniques. Drill the basics first and proceed in due course.

Before we go to the Techniques themselves, it is important to remember: **the purpose of Gun defenses is to take the gun away from the assailant!** Certainly *not* to tumble and rumble.

9.2 Threats from the Front

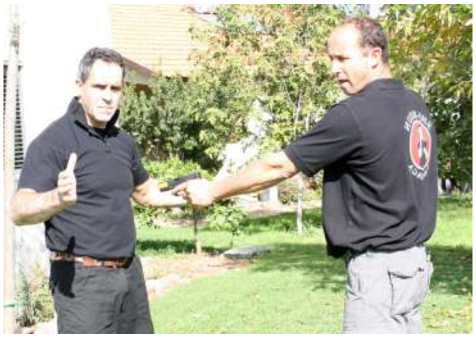
Threats from the Front are the most common, as a threatening attacker usually wants something from you. Here are a few ways to deal with it. Try and drill all defenses presented; some are very similar. After lots of drilling, you'll see what best fits you and you should then concentrate your drilling on those.

The first example is an **applied Lateral Disarm** as it should be drilled by beginners: *using the whole body in the technique* to make sure to have enough power. Against a gun placed on or poking at your gut, you pivot out of the line of fire while grabbing both wrist and barrel from below. Twist back *with all the power of both your arms and your hips* to break his fingers and disarm him. Move away.



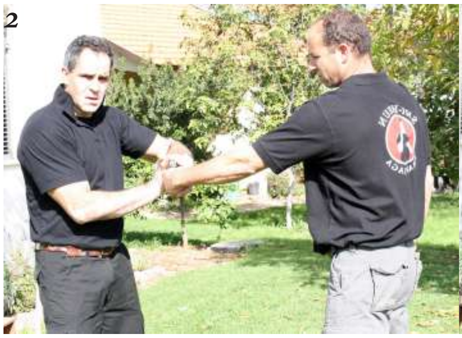
Full-powered Lateral Disarm against gut-poking with gun

Our first set of Photos illustrates same simple **applied Lateral Disarm**, but in a more advanced version. In this example, it is the opponent's *hand* that is controlled, but the principles stay the same. You pivot while grabbing and moving the armed hand. Twist the hand and weapon violently and move away with the gun.

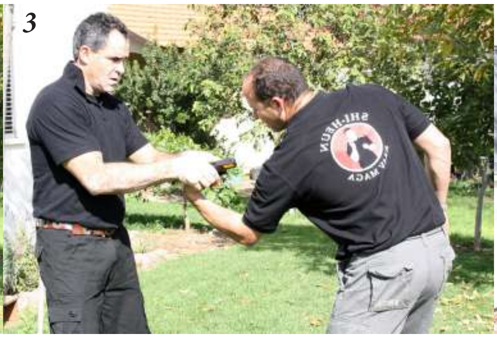


Lateral 'wristlock' Disarm

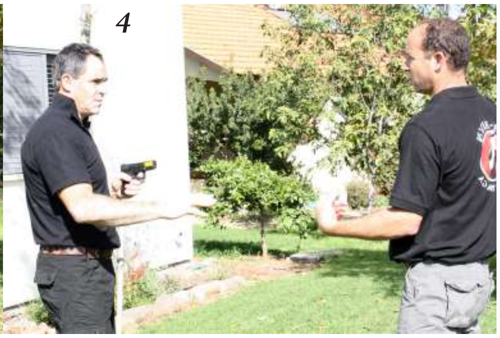
2



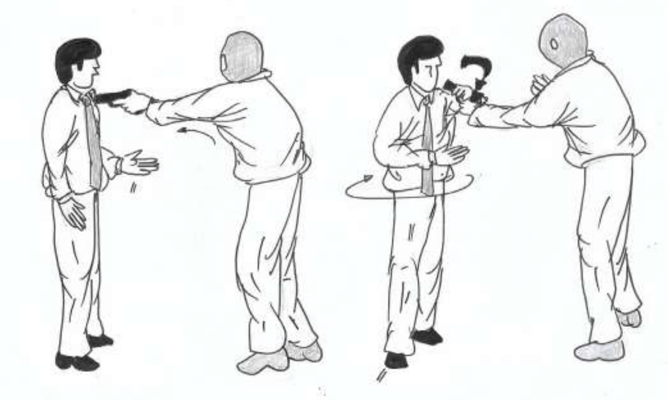
3



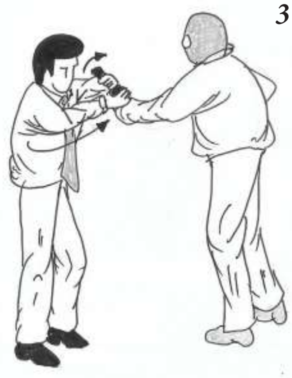
4



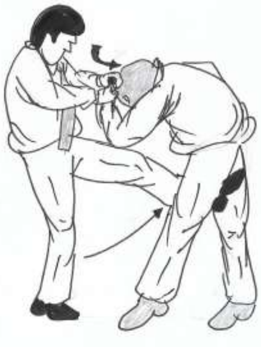
Next comes a **hybrid between Lateral and Vertical Disarm**. As illustrated below, you lift your hands in surrender against a gun pointed towards your upper chest from very close. As soon as they are level with the gun, you grab the barrel and deviate it out while pivoting simultaneously out of the line of fire. You then grab the armed wrist with your other hand and start pushing the barrel both up and laterally out. Of course, the pushing pivot is centered around the trigger and you hold the armed wrist firmly in place. The pivot is *violent* and should break the trigger finger. You can then kick the opponent's groin before pulling the gun away forcefully *with both hands*. Take your safe distance.



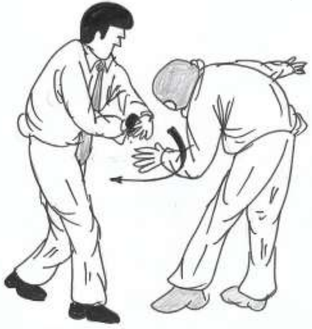
3



4

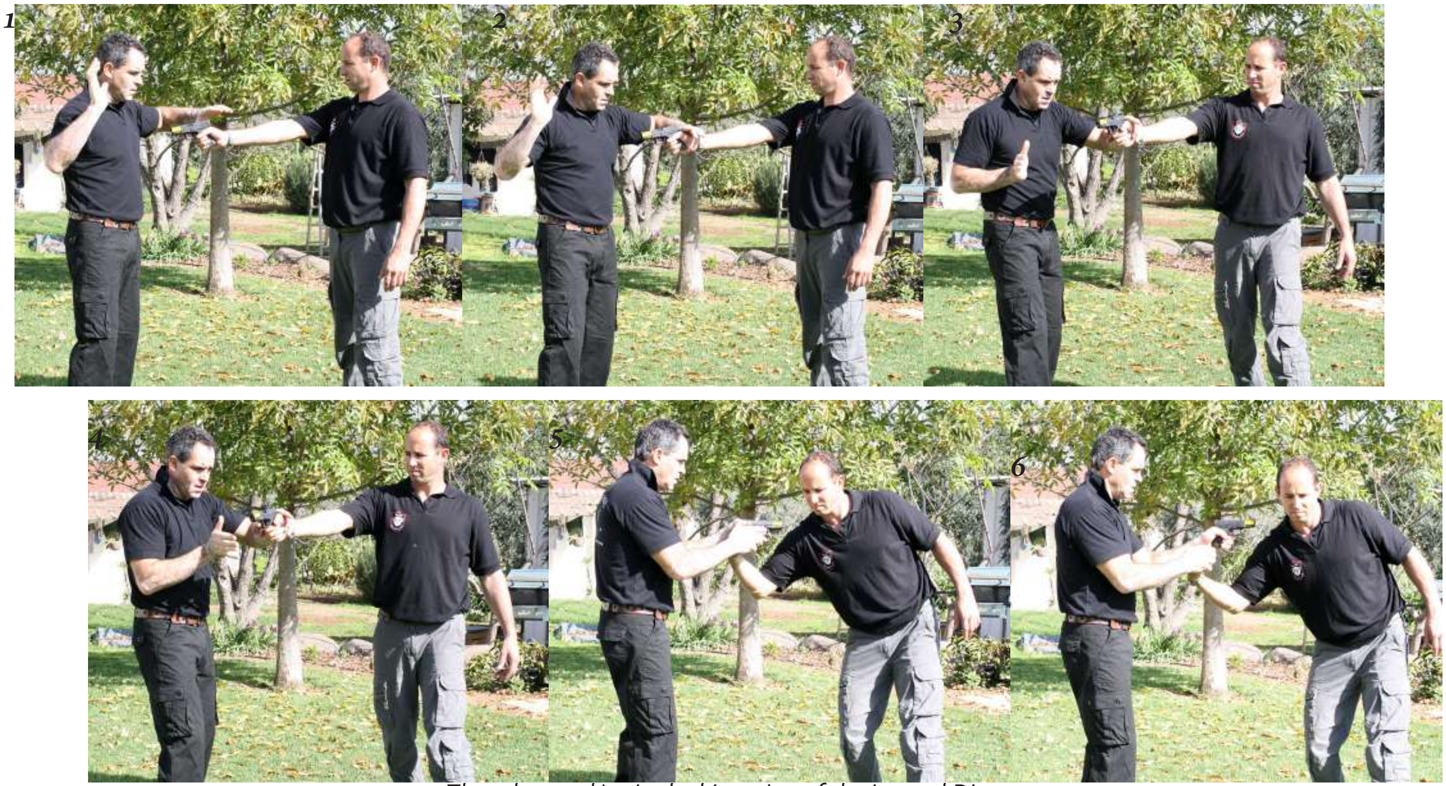


5



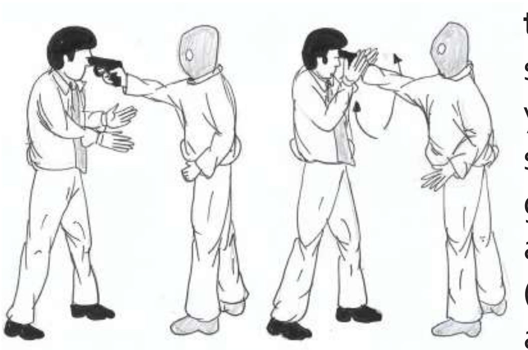
Applied 'Diagonal' Disarm with groin Kick

The next set of Photos shows the **more advanced version of the Lateral Disarm**, in which *you grab the armed hand with both hands* rather than barrel and wrist. It is a Wrist-lock type of grab that is faster but requires more training and strength. The principles are exactly the same though.

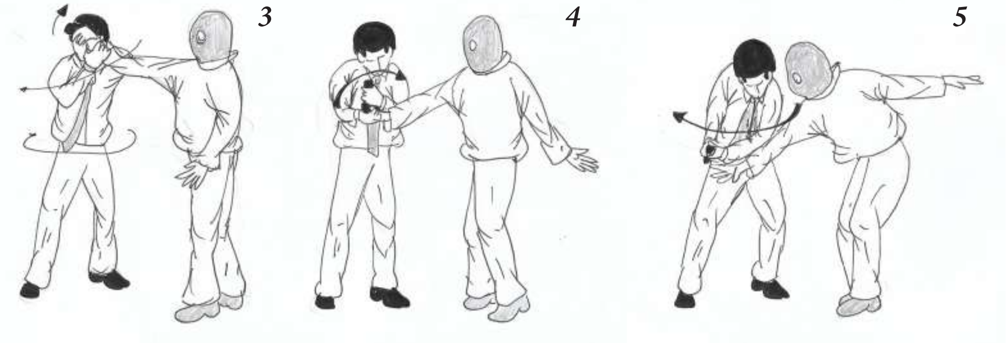


The advanced 'wrist-lock' version of the Lateral Disarm

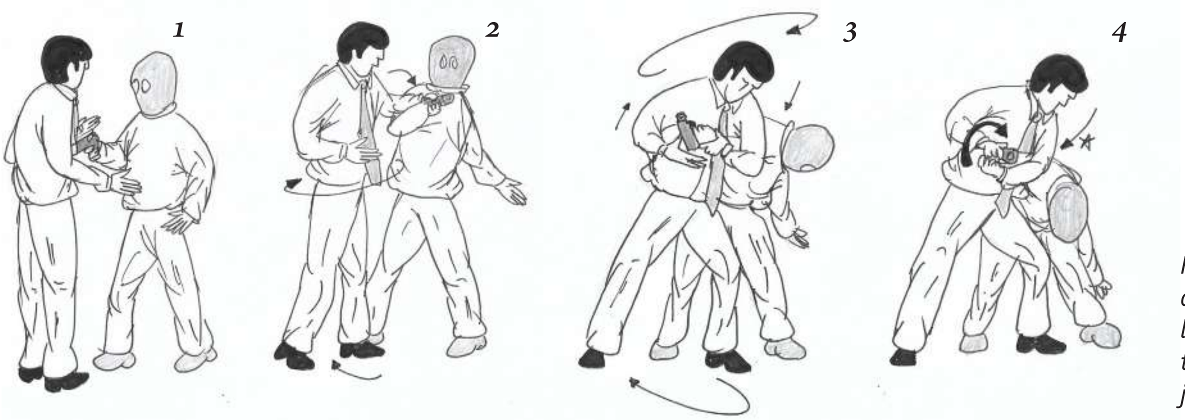
The coming Illustrations show a simple classic **Vertical Disarm against a gun hold to your face.** You grab the gun hand with both hands simultaneously while getting out of the way (Of course, you have broken the inertia by lifting your hands in clear surrender). Immediately start to lift the barrel of the gun around the trigger axis while pulling his wrist down and forward. Use your whole body for the violent pulling (down and forward) of his gun out of his grip. Push him away with your shoulder and take your distance.



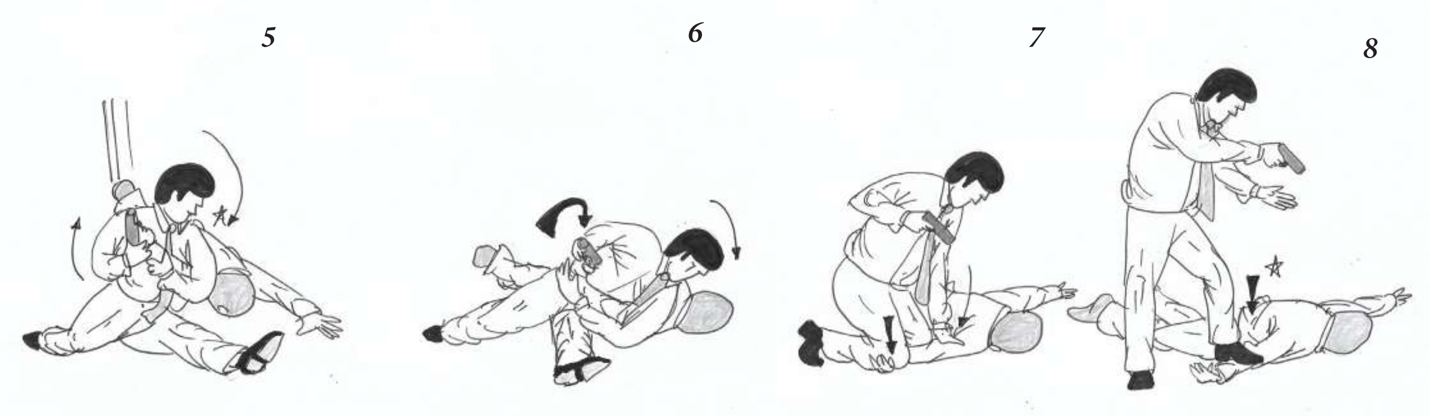
Vertical Disarm clean and simple



And now for a full application of the **Corkscrew Disarm**. You are threatened by gun contact to your chest. Lift your hands and grab the armed wrist or hand with one hand. Deviate the gun by pushing it *out, down and towards the assailant*, while getting out of the line of fire. Keep the momentum to place the opponent in typical 'under-the-armpit' Armlock. This must be of course done *violently, explosively and with the use of your whole body*. In this position, you can grab the gun barrel and execute the **Corkscrew Disarm**. All the while, you let yourself fall down *with all your weight and energy onto his elbow*. Grab the gun, push his arm to the ground and place your knees on his wrist and elbow in order to safely stand up. Stomp his elbow or/and wrist and/or fingers to neutralize them, and take your distance.

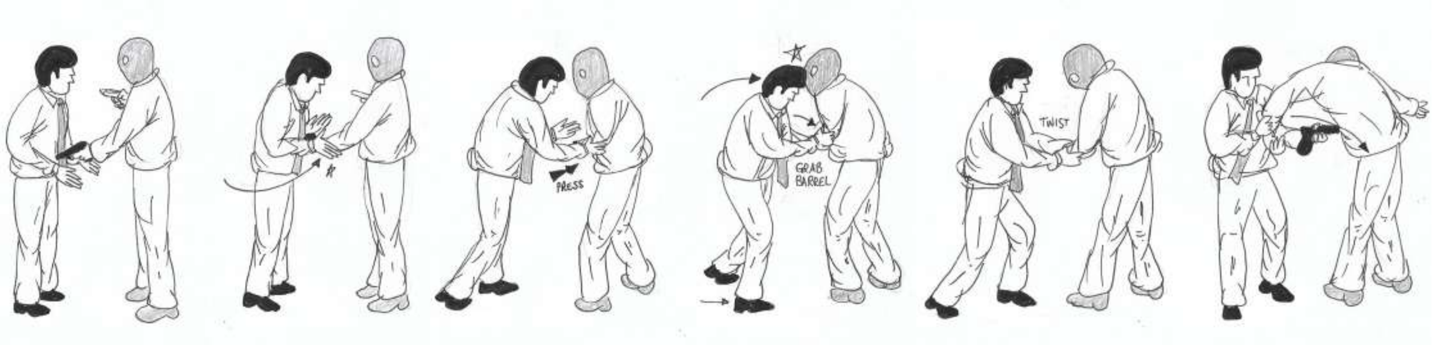


Full corkscrew Disarm application that will leave the opponent on the ground with broken joints



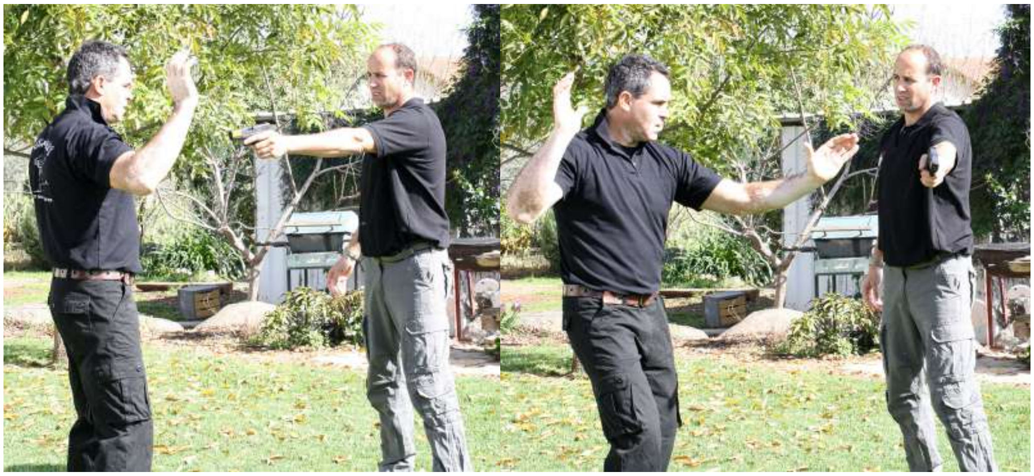
When you become familiar with the Disarming Moves, you should be able to execute them with narrower and shorter movements. It comes from practice and power management, but it requires drilling and explosiveness. The Figures at the top of ext page illustrate such an **economical Lateral Disarm**. Against a gun pointed touching your gut, you push the gun wrist straight into the opponent's belly *with all your body power forward*. The move itself deviates the line of fire. The push becomes a wrist grab, and your forceful forward momentum allows for a simultaneous headbutt aiming for his nose. Grab the barrel with your other hand and execute a *violent* Lateral Disarm. As soon as he lets go of the gun, keep your forward momentum and push forward while twisting and lifting his wrist. You can eventually kick his groin before taking your distance.

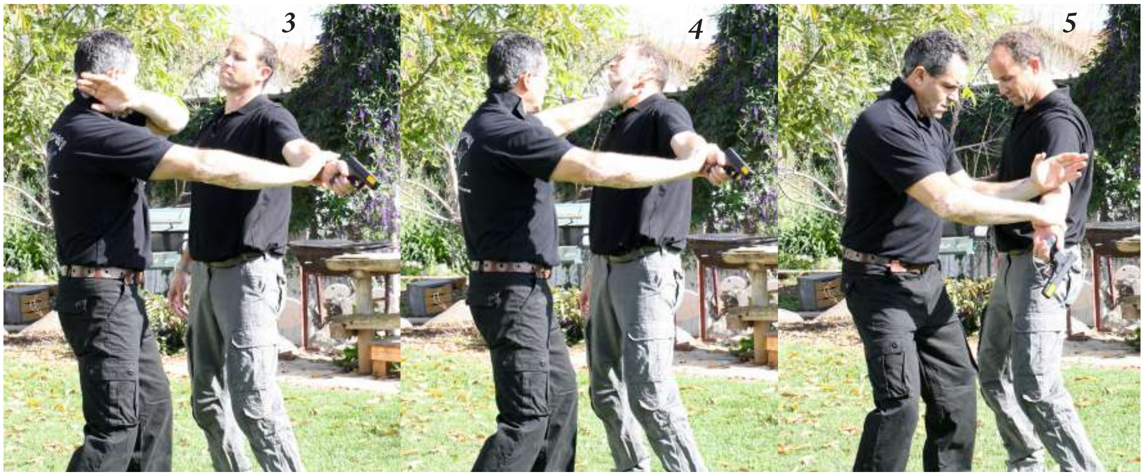
➤



Explosive but economical Lateral Disarm with strong forward momentum

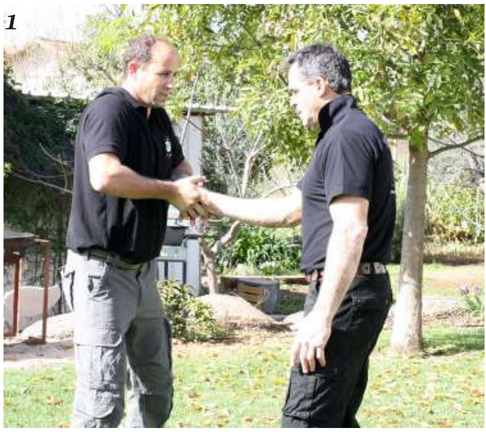
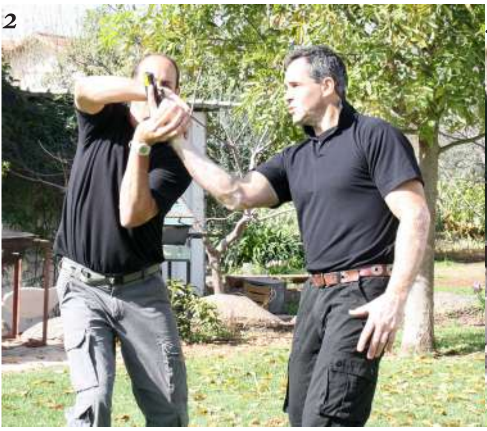
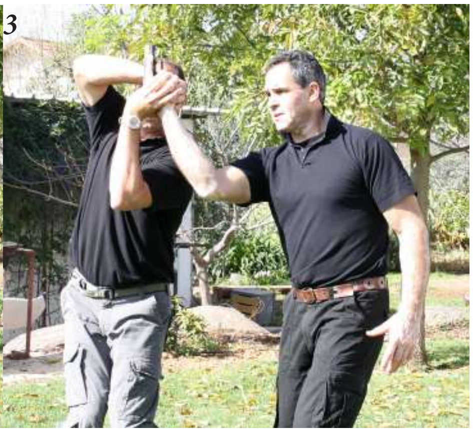
The coming Photos will show an **advanced technique** that should be enough if executed by an experienced *Kravist*. It looks simple but requires drilling for a safe execution. On the other hand, the whole series could also be the prelude to a classic Disarm as presented before. Drill this carefully at the beginning, and complete it with a Disarm if you feel it necessary. Against a high front gun threat, you slap out the offending hand (with same-side hand) and grab the armed wrist with the opposite hand. Attack the opponent's throat or side of the neck with the knife-edge of the 'slapping hand'. Simultaneously you pull on his grabbed wrist in order to pull him into the strike. Remember to strike *through the throat with everything you got*. You then use the same knife-edge to strike down through the armed forearm. You should twist the arm in order to target the upper forearm muscles near the elbow rich in nerve endings. If it has not been enough, you should follow up with a groin knee strike and a classical Disarm.



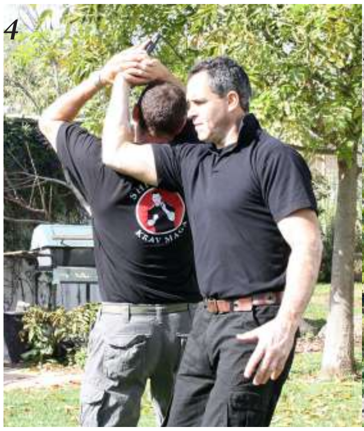
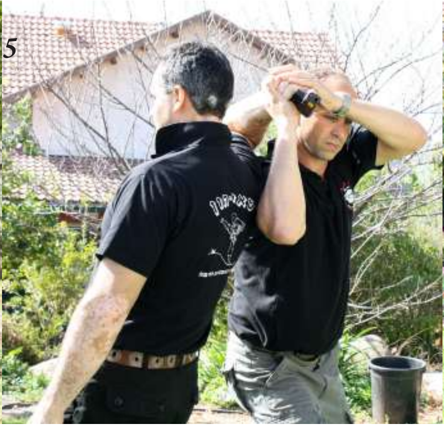
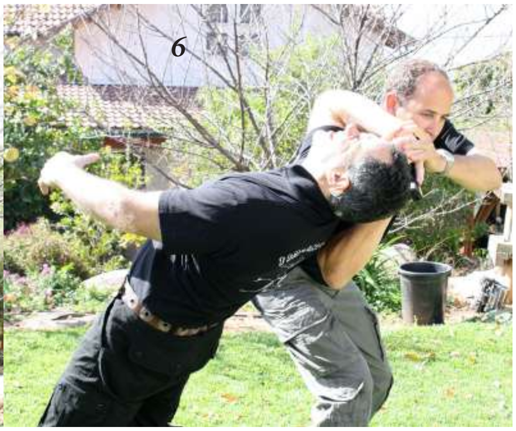


Advanced 'striking' gun defense that can also be the prelude to a classical Disarm

Another advanced technique is presented below. The Photos show the use of the classic *Aiki-Jitsu* Takedown '*Shiho Nage*' to deal with a Front Gun Threat. The technique is easy to execute but it requires training to ensure success. The *Krav Maga* version is shorter than the *Aikido* version and is more about *dislocating the shoulder* than about throwing him down. The movement must be *short and violent* (but not in training obviously). It is important to go *forward* with the twist of the body and to push *through* the opponent's body. Do not try to execute this move from far away, and remember that it requires serious training for a complete mastery.

1

2

3


Advanced: Shoulder dislocation of a gun armed attacker

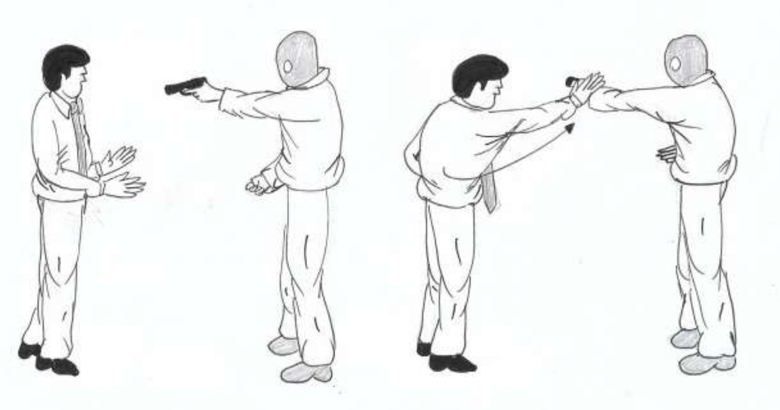
4

5

6


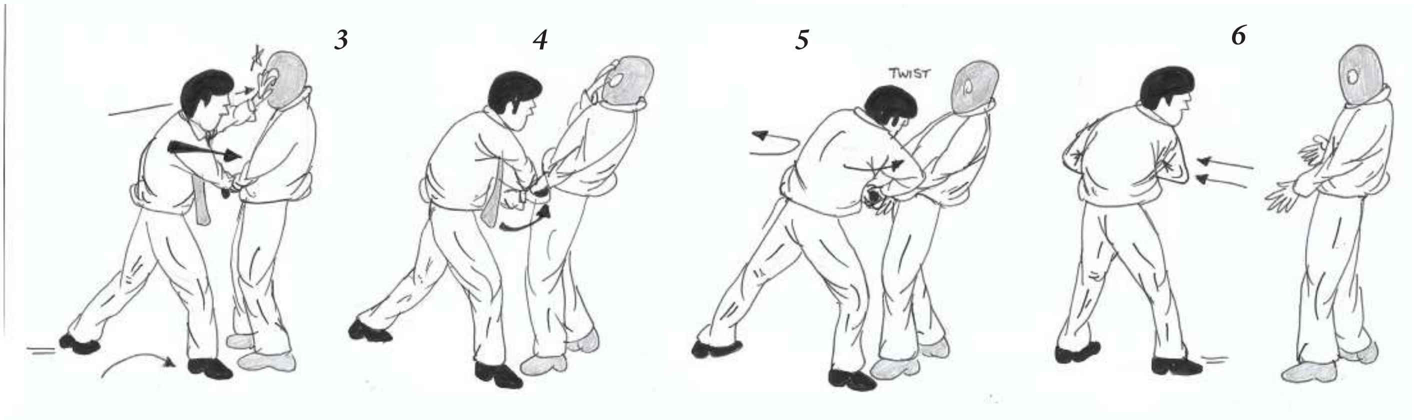
We shall conclude this Chapter with two applied Disarms against a **front gun threat from a longer range.**

The problem with a **longer range** is obvious: you have to be able to deviate the line of fire before the aggressor squeezes the trigger. It is still possible the gun is an arm length away from you. Of course, you have to be fast, explosive and well-trained.

The important point to remember for **longer range** defenses is that *your hand must start moving first*, before any body move. The hand is fast, and if you start with the body move at the same time, you will lose speed and have the opponent react earlier. So, *it is imperative to throw your hand fast to grab or slap the gun*, and then follow with the body move forward (and out of the fire line). Once you are closer to the attacker, the techniques will be identical to the regular Disarms we have seen before.

The first Drawings illustrate how you **slap and grab the gun wrist or hand with a fast hand move**. Only after contact do you lunge forward and push the grabbed wrist down and towards the opponent's belly. *Use all your body momentum* for that, and simultaneously, use your other hand to finger-poke his eyes without pity. Use the poking hand to grab the barrel from below and execute a Lateral Disarm while pushing him with your elbow and shoulder (for good hands alignment). Pull the gun out of his grip with *both hands and your whole body*. You can eventually kick his groin before retreating at a safe distance. The key to the technique is the starting hand-move and lunge, and it needs serious drilling.

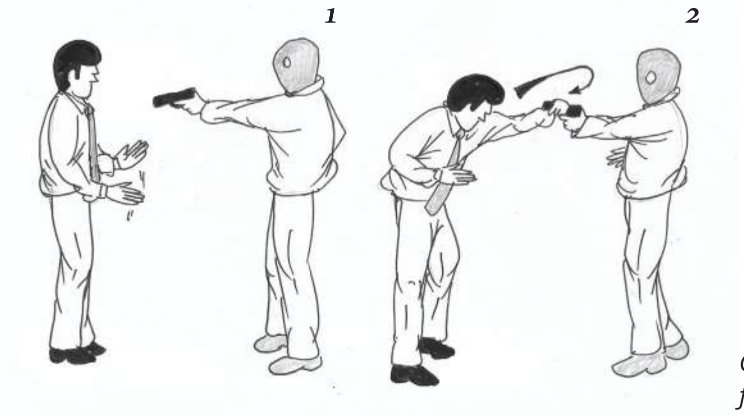




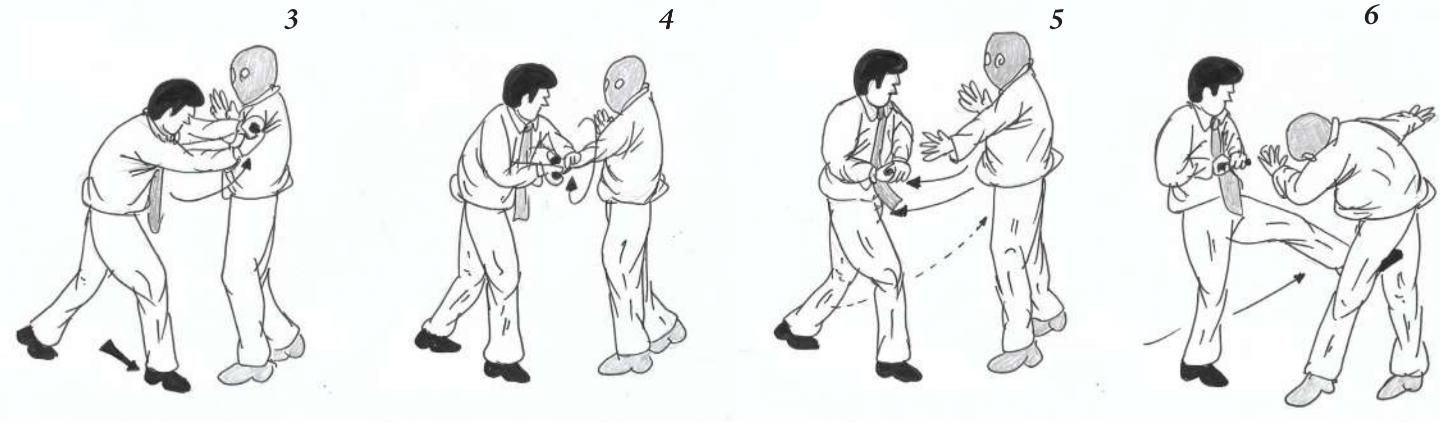
Mid-range gun threat: Slap and grab the gun before lunging for the disarm

The second example, illustrated at the top of next page, reinforces the same principle of **grabbing with the hand first before starting the explosive lunging move**. This is all there is to longer range gun threat handling. You grab and deviate the barrel of the gun (with same-side hand) before lunging forward. Use all your momentum to push his gun sideways and then grab his wrist from below with your other hand. Twist the gun around the trigger finger while keeping the wrist in place, and then pull it out *violently with all your body power*. Kick his groin and take your distance!

➔



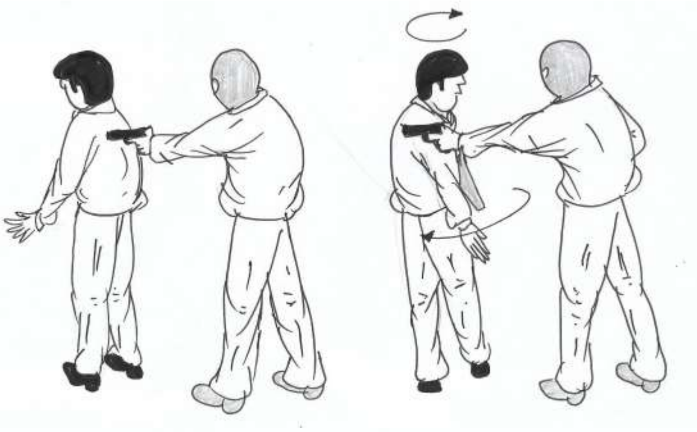
Grab the gun barrel fast before lunging forward and disarming

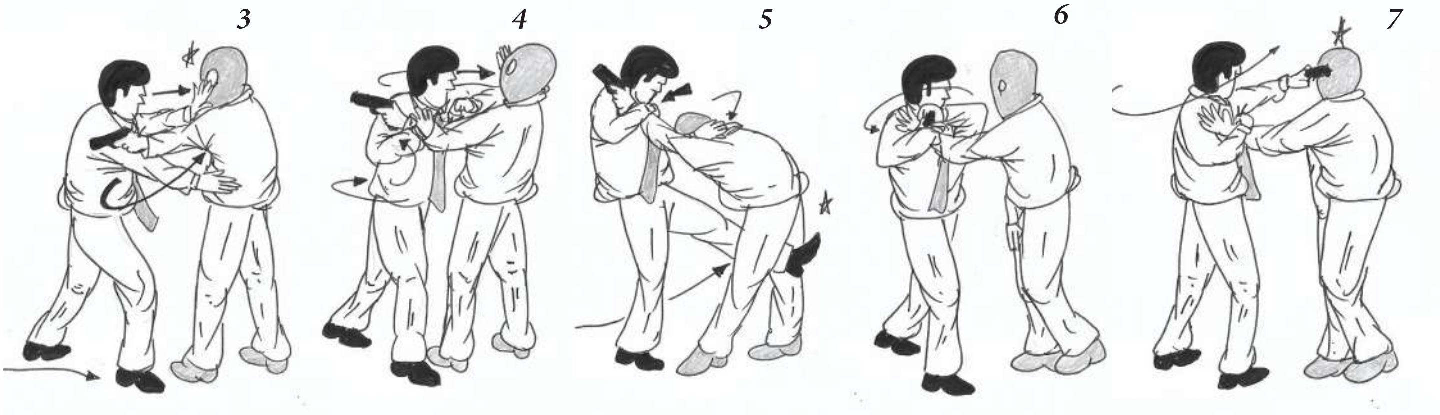


9.3 Threats from the Back

Being held at gun point **from the back** is even more problematic. It is imperative that you take a peek to assess the situation. Maybe the attacker is not alone, or he has a weapon in his other hand as well, or ... You need to lift your hands in a convincingly subdued way and turn your head to have a look, preferably a fearful look that will convince the attacker that you are cooperating. Do not turn with your body at this stage, only the head. If you then decide to fight, you'll have to explode into a body twist that will both *push the hand away and remove your body from the line of fire*.
The only good news is that the first move of all defenses is pretty easy, fast and effective. The rest follows the principles we already know from the front defenses.

The first example illustrated below shows how you explode in a **body twist** that also pushes the gun hand away. At this stage, you only twist; do not alert him by trying to also move towards him. Concentrate on the speed of the twist: this is the most important thing to get out of the line of fire. Then, you can lunge towards him with a Poke to the eyes, while your 'blocking arm encircles his gun arm from below. Press his gun hand onto your shoulder while going from Eye Poke to Elbow Strike, preferably to the throat. Press his neck down as you naturally kick his groin. Of course, you keep tight control of his gun hand. Now that he is seriously mollified, get hold of the barrel of the gun with the free hand. His wrist is hold in place against your shoulder by the other hand. A violent Lateral Disarm will pry the gun out of his grip. The natural trajectory of the Disarm will lead to a gun strike to the head before you take your distance.



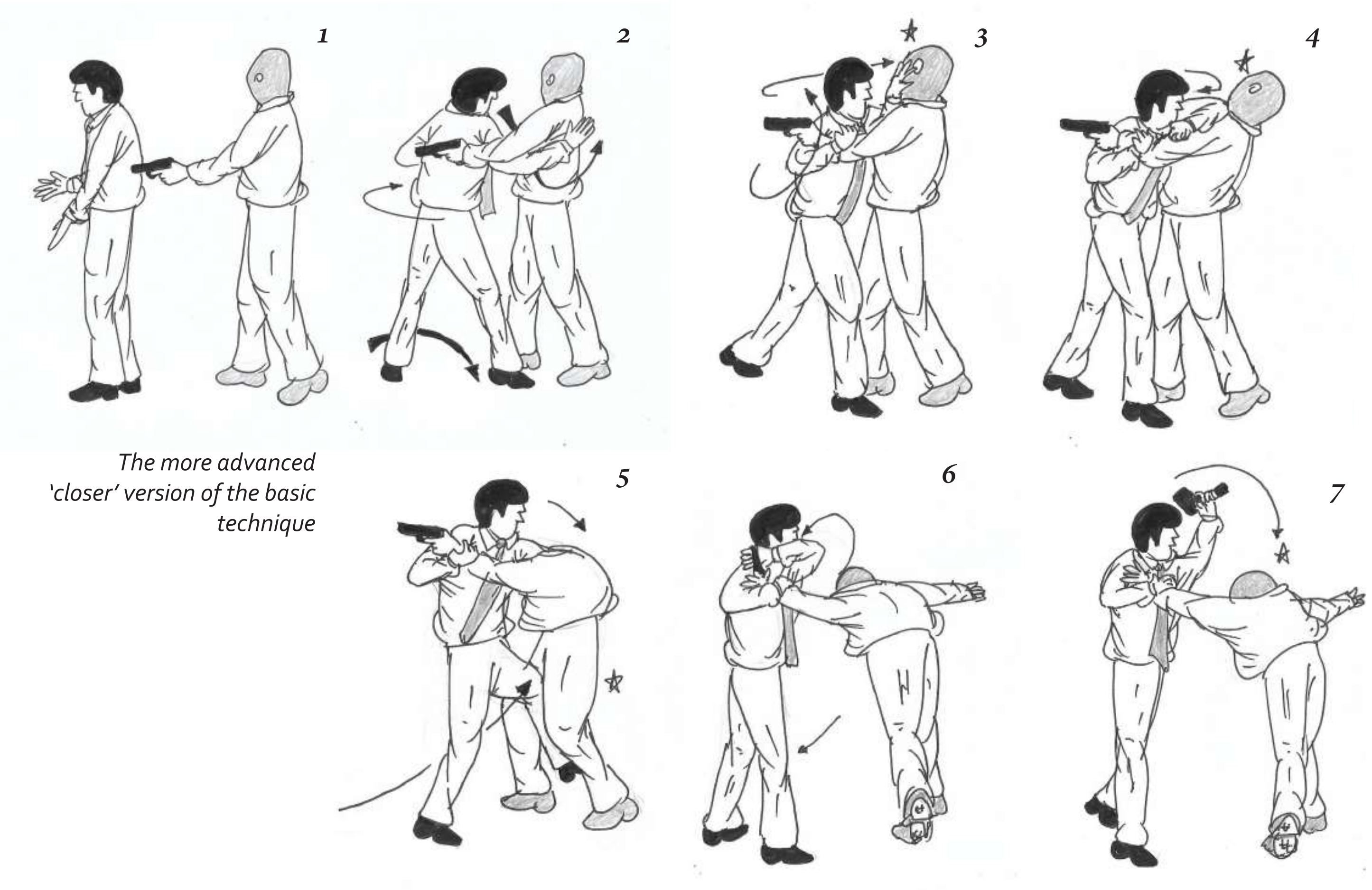


Basic defense and disarm against a gun threat from the back

As you can see from the second set of Drawings, at the top of next page, this basic technique stays nearly identical if you can **get closer to the attacker from the start**, which requires more training and proficiency. It is then easier to lift his head with the Eye Strike to better open his throat to the Elbow Strike. And the Groin Kick then becomes a Knee Strike.

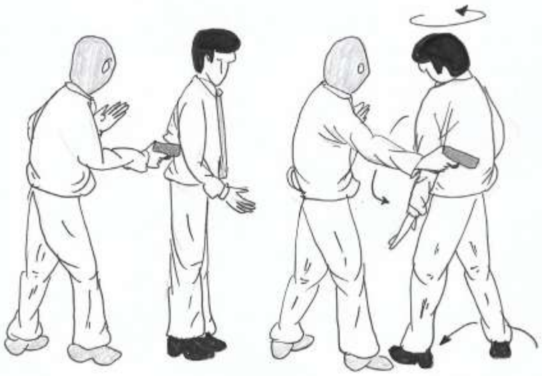
➤

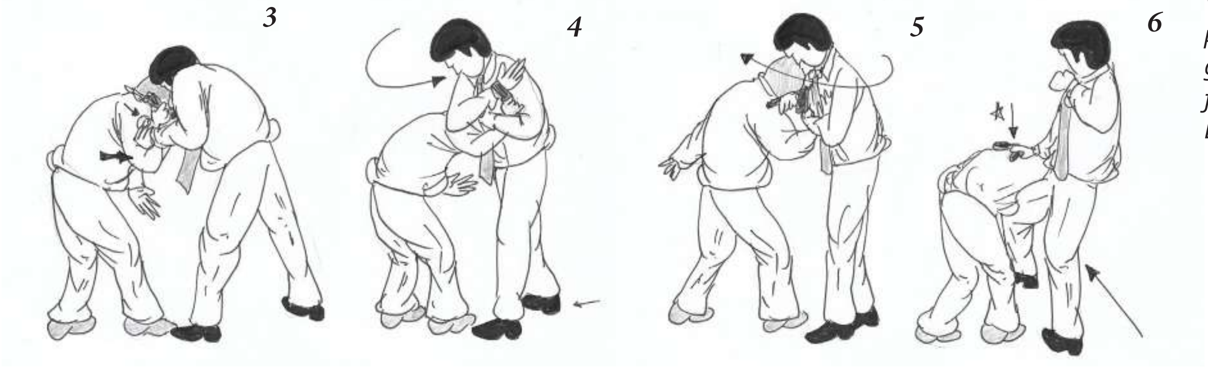
Nothing is more harmful to the world than a martial art that is not effective in actual self-defense.
~Choki Motobu



The more advanced ‘closer’ version of the basic technique

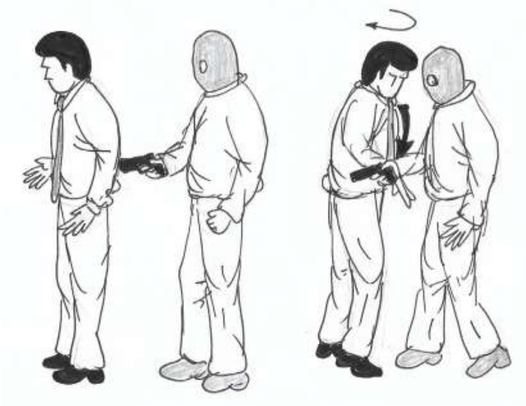
A more advanced way to deal with the threat is presented in the next Illustrations. It dispenses with all the ‘mollifying’ strikes and **goes right for the Disarm**. But it requires more training, proficiency and confidence. You should start drilling it *after you have fully* *mastered* *the previous versions*. After the pivot you immediately set a very strong vise on the armed wrist and go for the barrel with the other hand. The Lateral Disarm will relieve him of his weapon and then you can knee him (while striking him with the gun). Take your distance at once.

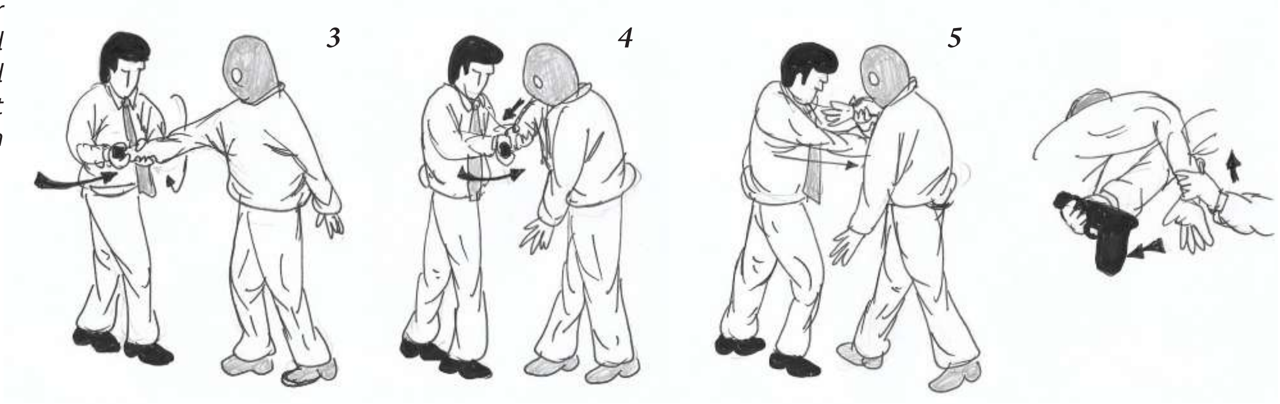




When proficient, go directly for the Disarm

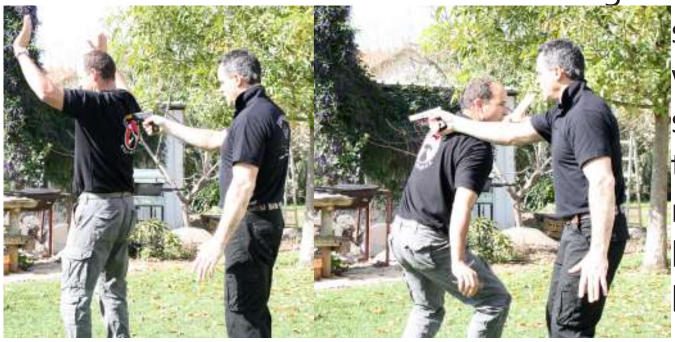
Another advanced variation that goes directly for the Disarm is presented below. It also requires good drilling. In this example, you twist and deviate like always, but you keep pivoting to get hold of the opponent's armed wrist with the second (non-blocking) hand. You have quasi-simultaneously grabbed the barrel of the gun with the deviating hand, from below. The set-up allows for a *fast and violent* Lateral Disarm in which you *use the momentum of a strong lunge towards him*. You are pushing the armed wrist diagonally under his own shoulder for a better disarm. Push him away and take your distance.

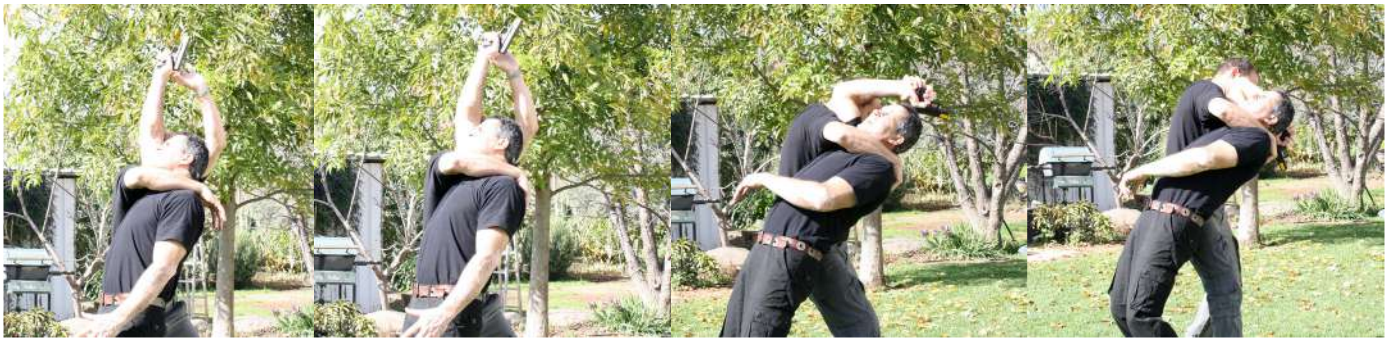




Another advanced simple and straight Disarm

A different approach against a rear gun threat is presented in the Photos below. This is also an advanced technique that requires serious drilling. The Disarm is an optional addition at the end of the series. You pivot and deviate classically, but you then lunge and overtake him to his out-side while 'clothe-lining' him. Strike his neck *forcefully* and squeeze. Your shoulder pushes his own shoulder into his carotid, while your forearm does the same on the other side. Keep your strong momentum 'through' him to bend him backwards. At the same time, you reach for the gun with your other hand and bend his arm down. You can take him down and choke him, or you can twist the gun out of his grip.

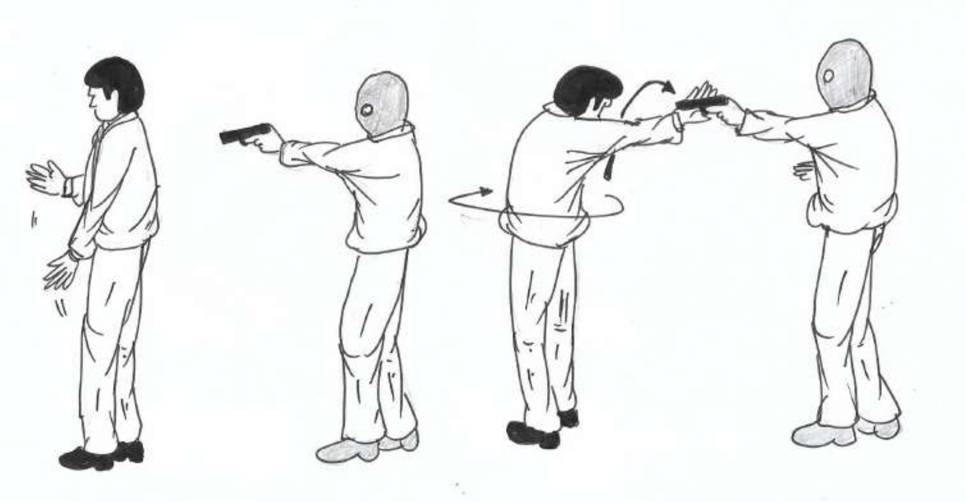




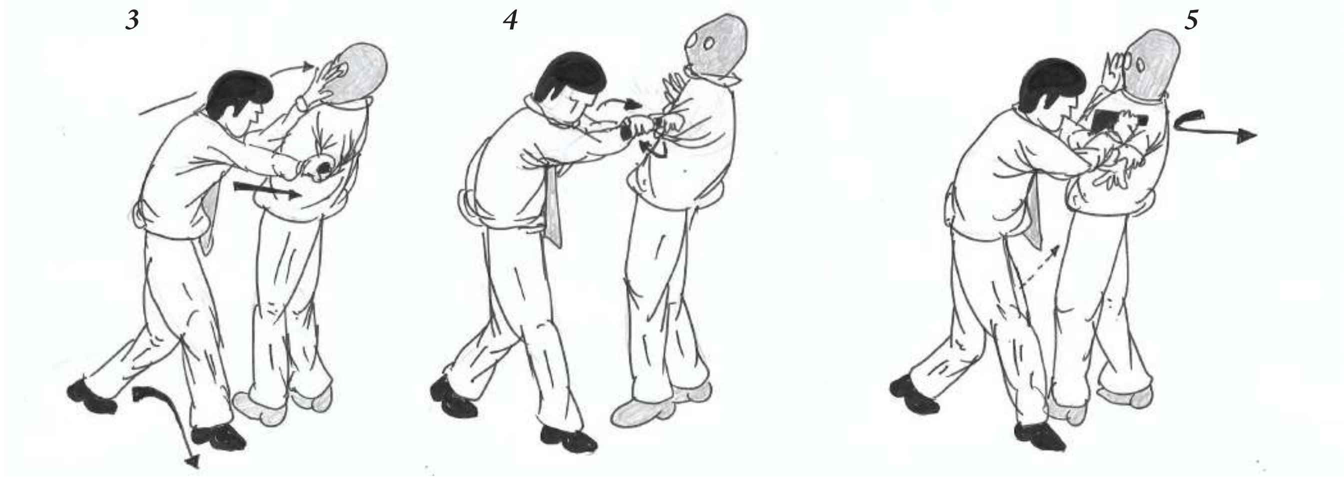
Advanced 'clothesline and choke' defense; drill seriously

And we shall conclude this section with an example of defense **when the gun threat from the rear is at some** (*reasonable*) **distance**. First you definitely need to peek to assess the situation: Really a gun? How far? Alone? Focused? Alert? For that you need to reassure the attacker by raising your hands and looking sufficiently subdued. If you decide to act, remember that the twist and necessary hip twist come before you start to move towards him. Speed and explosiveness are of the essence and any feet movement or body lunge will slow you down and alert him early. Just like for the Front defenses from some distance!
Here is the proposed technique, although, once you are safely closer, anything else already seen can work. Go with your gut!

The Drawings below illustrate how to *explosively twist and throw the arm to grab the gun barrel*. This is only after you have peeked to check the situation. You can start lunging towards the attacker only after the start of the twist and arm extension. Push the barrel to the side with his arm extended and go for an Eye Poke. Keep going diagonally towards his out-side while your poking hand comes to grab his armed wrist. Use your momentum to push him both physically and psychologically and execute a classic Lateral Disarm. You are superbly placed for a Groin Knee Strike, that can eventually be followed by a strike to the skull with his own gun. Take your distance.



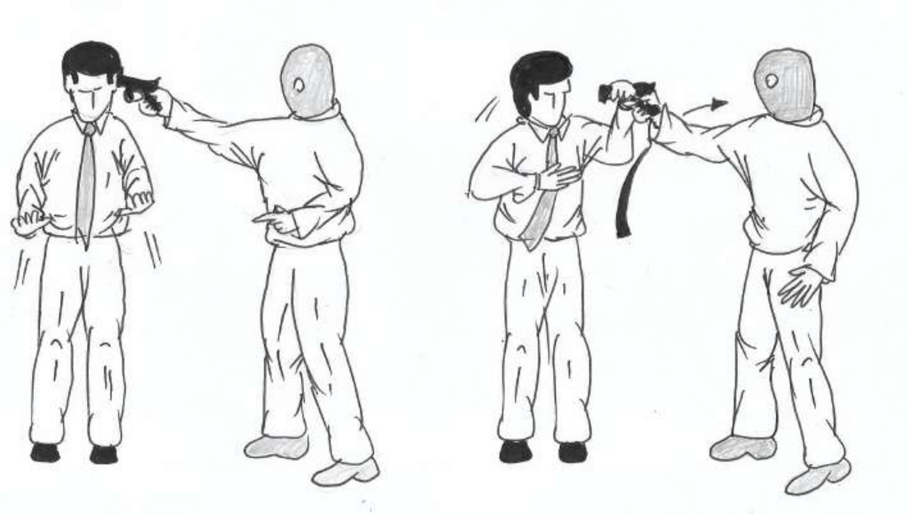
Applied Lateral Disarm against a mid-range Back Gun Threat; explode into the twist and reach to grab



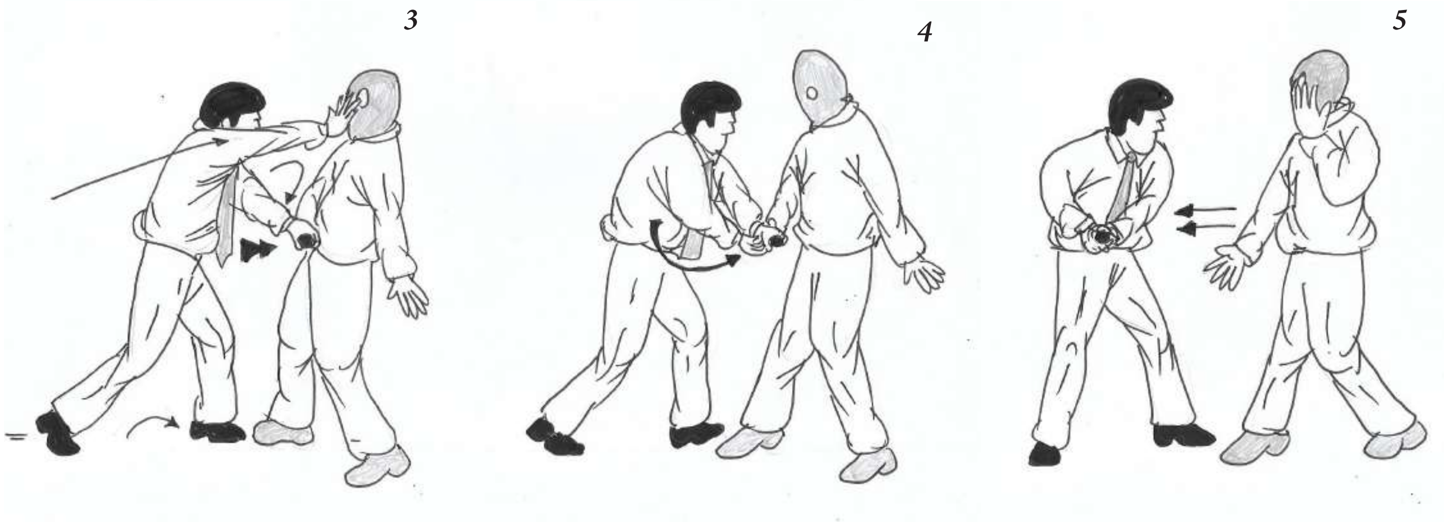
9.4 Threats from the Side

Threats from the side are not uncommon. They are usually linked to a mugger surprising you from a hiding place, although they can happen in a whole range of situations. The Disarms will be in line with what we have presented before for threats from the front and the back, but it is good to drill the specific situation.

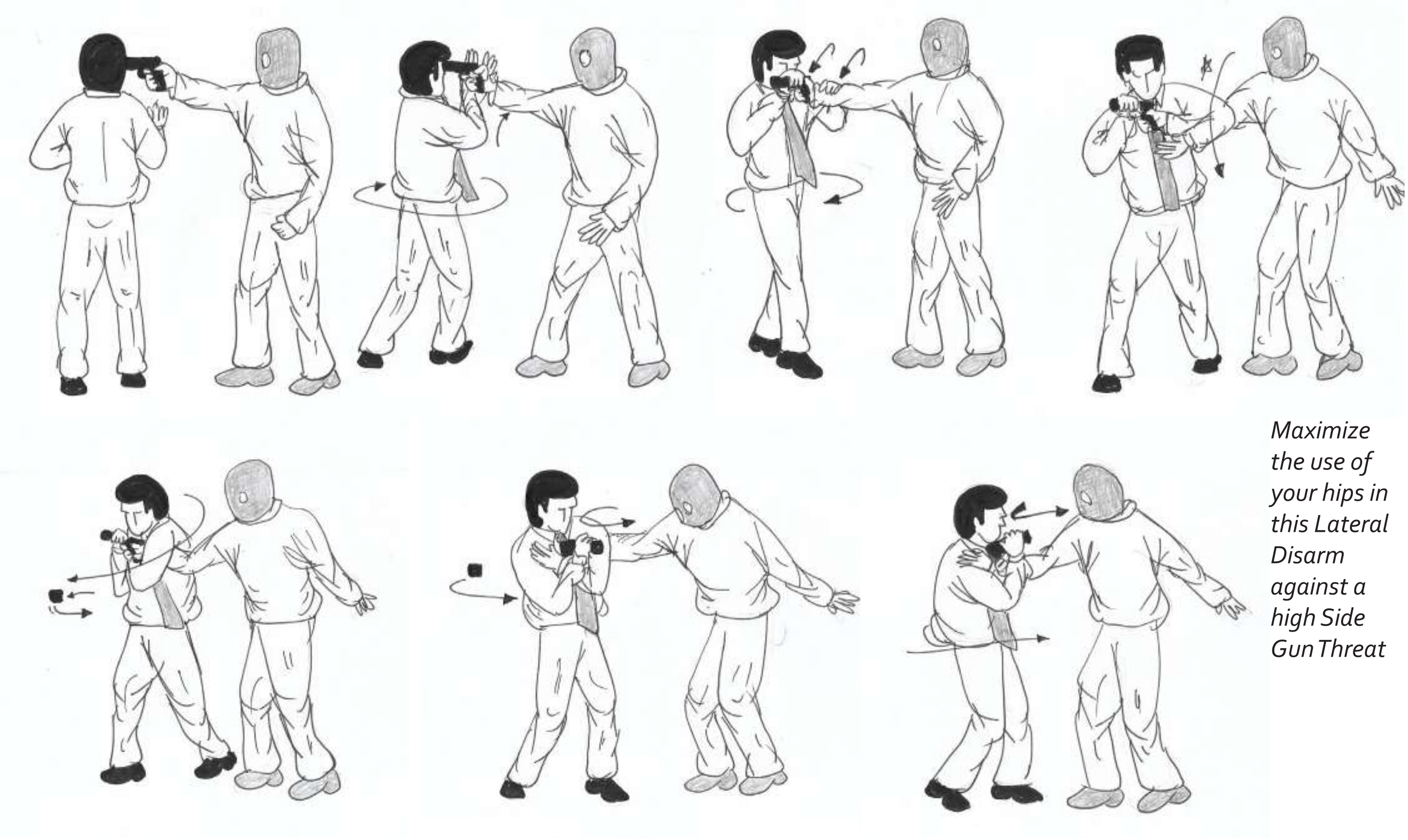
The first set of Drawings illustrates how to **classically react to a gun being held close to the side of your head**: grab and deviate the barrel while removing yourself from the line of fire. You can then twist and lunge powerfully towards him. Push the gun hand towards his gut while attacking his eyes. Use the poking hand to come and grab the opponent's hand or wrist from below. Execute a classic violent Lateral Disarm while pulling back *with all your body* to pry the gun from his hands. Take your distance, eventually after a Groin Kick.



Simple and direct Disarm against a gun threat to the side of your head



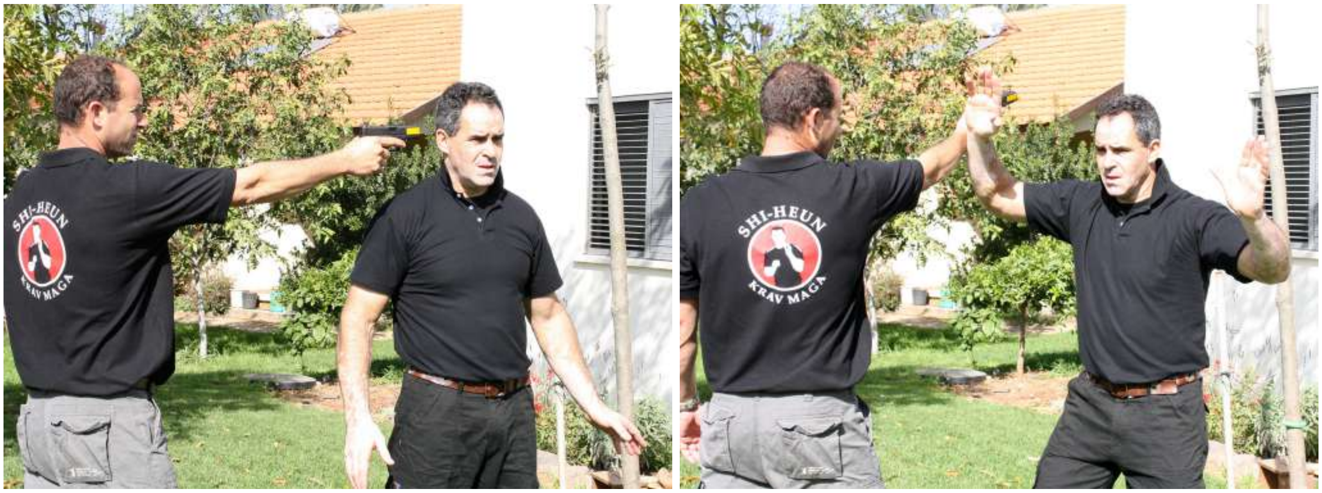
Our second example, illustrated below, will have you **go to the out-side of the attacker**. You *explode* into the hip twist, the head evasion and the deviation of the gun line of fire. Using both your hands, you grab barrel and wrist simultaneously. Keep twisting and pull the armed arm forwards. Let go of the wrist grab to go over his extended arm and strike down on his arm with your armpit. Lock the armed wrist below your armpit and press it against your ribcage. Keep twisting: this is your way of using *all your body power* to control him. Stop the twist suddenly to change the direction of the hip twist. This will allow to use all your hip power while executing a classic Lateral Disarm. His wrist is blocked under your armpit and you violently twist the barrel of the gun towards him with all you have. Kick his groin and take your distance.

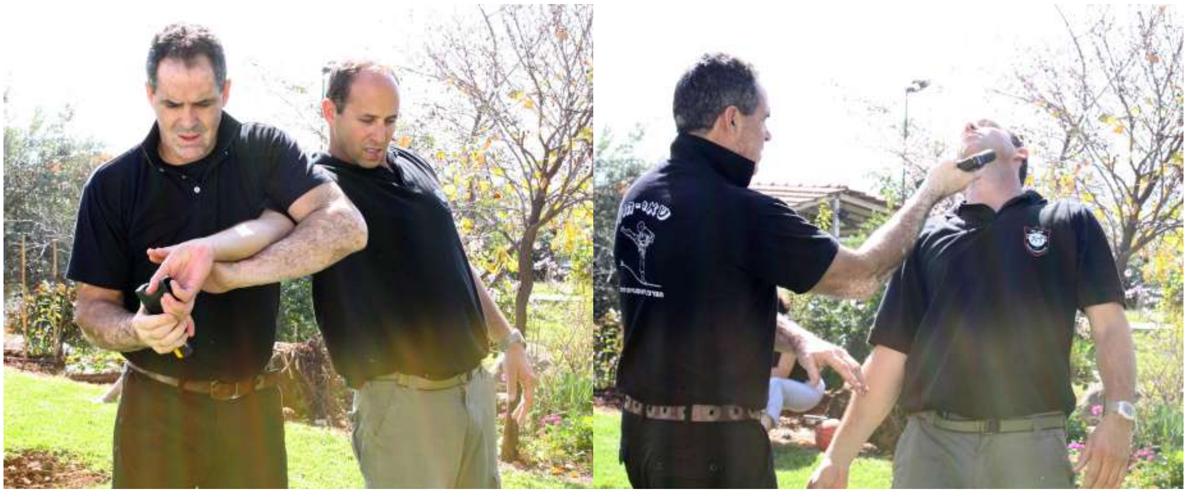


Maximize the use of your hips in this Lateral Disarm against a high Side Gun Threat

The coming set of Photos, at the top of next page, illustrates an **advanced version** of the preceding technique. You twist and remove the threat in the same way, but you proceed with the Disarm in place as soon as you have caught his arm under your armpit in what is a quasi-Armlock position. Twist the gun out of his fingers (and damage his trigger finger). You can then twist back to hit him with his gun, before you take your distance.

➔





A more advanced version of the twist into 'under armpit armlock position' opening

9.5 Long Gun Threats

A long gun can be a carabine, a shotgun or an assault weapon. Unfortunately, senseless violence has become a feature of modern society and the availability of such weapons make this scenario a sad possibility.

Dealing with a **long gun** is a big problem. First, you'll have to pray that the assailant is stupid enough to get close to you. The advantage of a long gun is about mid- to long distance. Bringing the barrel at grabbing distance from you would be totally crazy. Then you'd have to pray that this is going to be just a threat to extract something from you. If it is just random violence or terrorism, your chances of getting close are minimal. But who knows? Maybe you can weasel or sweet-talk yourself into a close range.

If you are lucky enough to be close and "only" threatened by a long gun, you should remember the following: you'll have to get *as close to him as possible* in order to negate the possibility of being shot. Moreover, in order to control the gun, you will have to control *both the barrel and the area of the trigger*! You have to be in control of both areas where his hands are because controlling the barrel only allows him to move and place you back in the line of fire.

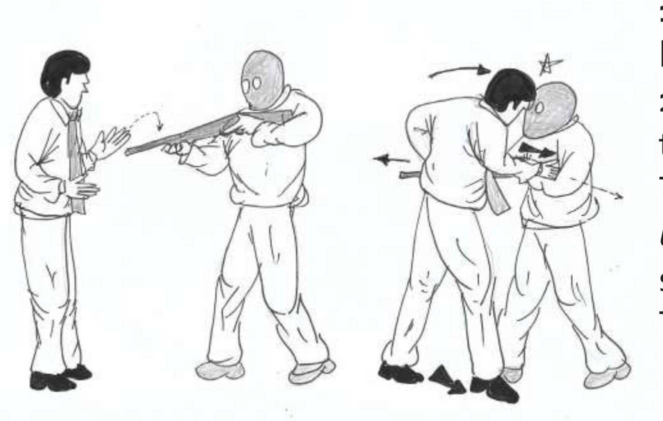
Techniques against a **Long Gun threat** are more difficult than against short guns. You are using the power of both your arms against the power of *both* his! Unlike for a short gun where both your hands are used in a fulcrum against only one of his wrists... This is why you'll have to drill hard and learn to use *all of your body* in these techniques.

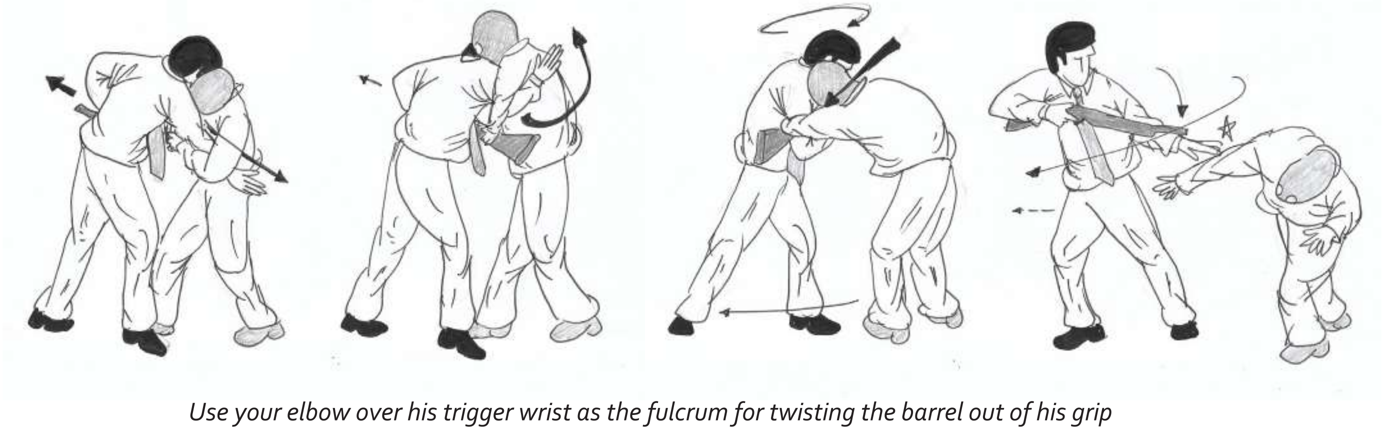
I hope it has been made clear that this is very problematic. If it is about your wallet, I strongly suggest you choose the relinquishing option...

The first set of Drawings illustrates what is **one of the safest options** in the author's opinion. Grab the gun barrel and deviate it out while lunging in and head-butting him in the center of the face. Do not pull when grabbing, in order to avoid the reflexive pull-back that could place you back in the line of fire. Pull as soon as you are close to him, and slide your hand under his trigger hand armpit. Push your arm up and as far as possible under his trigger arm and come back with it under his trigger wrist. This is going to be the second point of your fulcrum. You will now twist his gun violently out of his grab by:

1. Using all your body (and your elbow) to pull his trigger grip forward,
2. Pushing and twisting the barrel of the gun in the opposite direction.

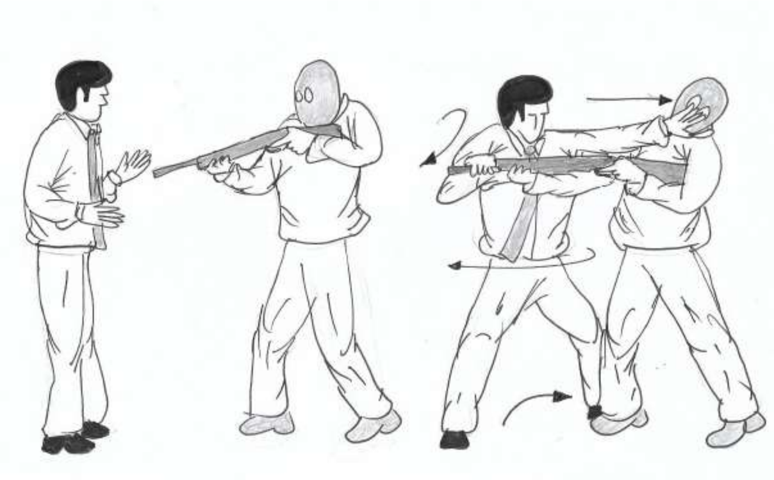
This is achieved by *pulling back your front leg and using a full pivot of your hips*. The twisting is also supposed to create pain at the trigger finger. Take your distance immediately.

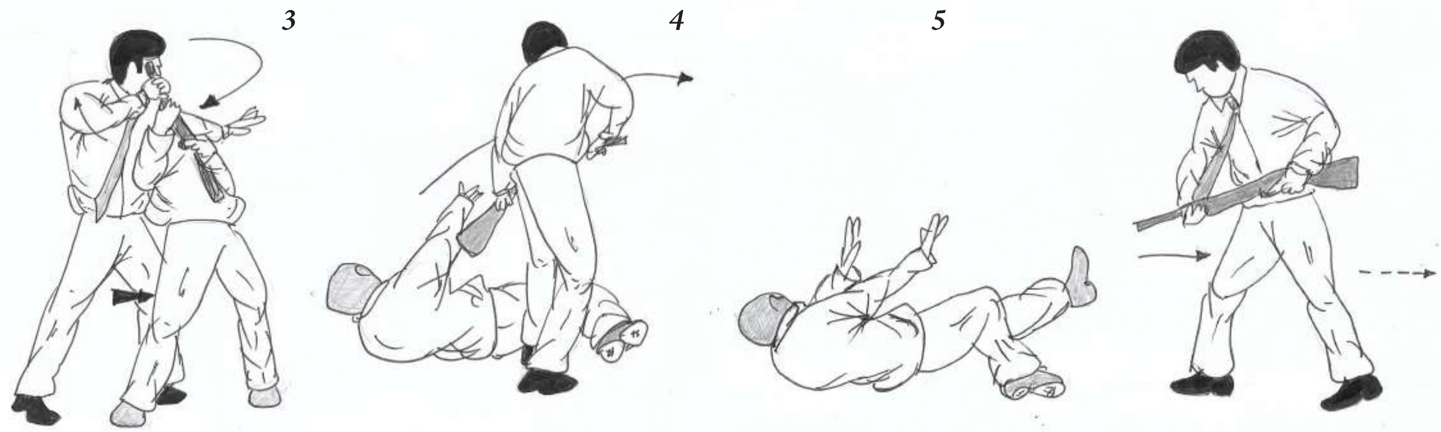




Use your elbow over his trigger wrist as the fulcrum for twisting the barrel out of his grip

The second example will show a **deviation of the barrel to the in-side**, as you lunge and grab the barrel with the 'rear' hand. The front hand executes a quasi-simultaneous Eye Poke. Keep your forward momentum as your 'poking' hand extends violently in front of his face. Place your leg and hip behind and push his head back and down. This classic set-up will make him fall over your leg. Grab the gun around the trigger area while keeping the push-down to topple him. The other hand twists the gun *up and around* to pry it out of his grips. Use *all your body* for the pivot and takedown, and he will fall on his back without his gun. Strike him with the butt of the gun and take your distance. Remember: keep very close to him for as long as he holds the trigger area and keep tight control of the barrel, close to you and out of the fire line.

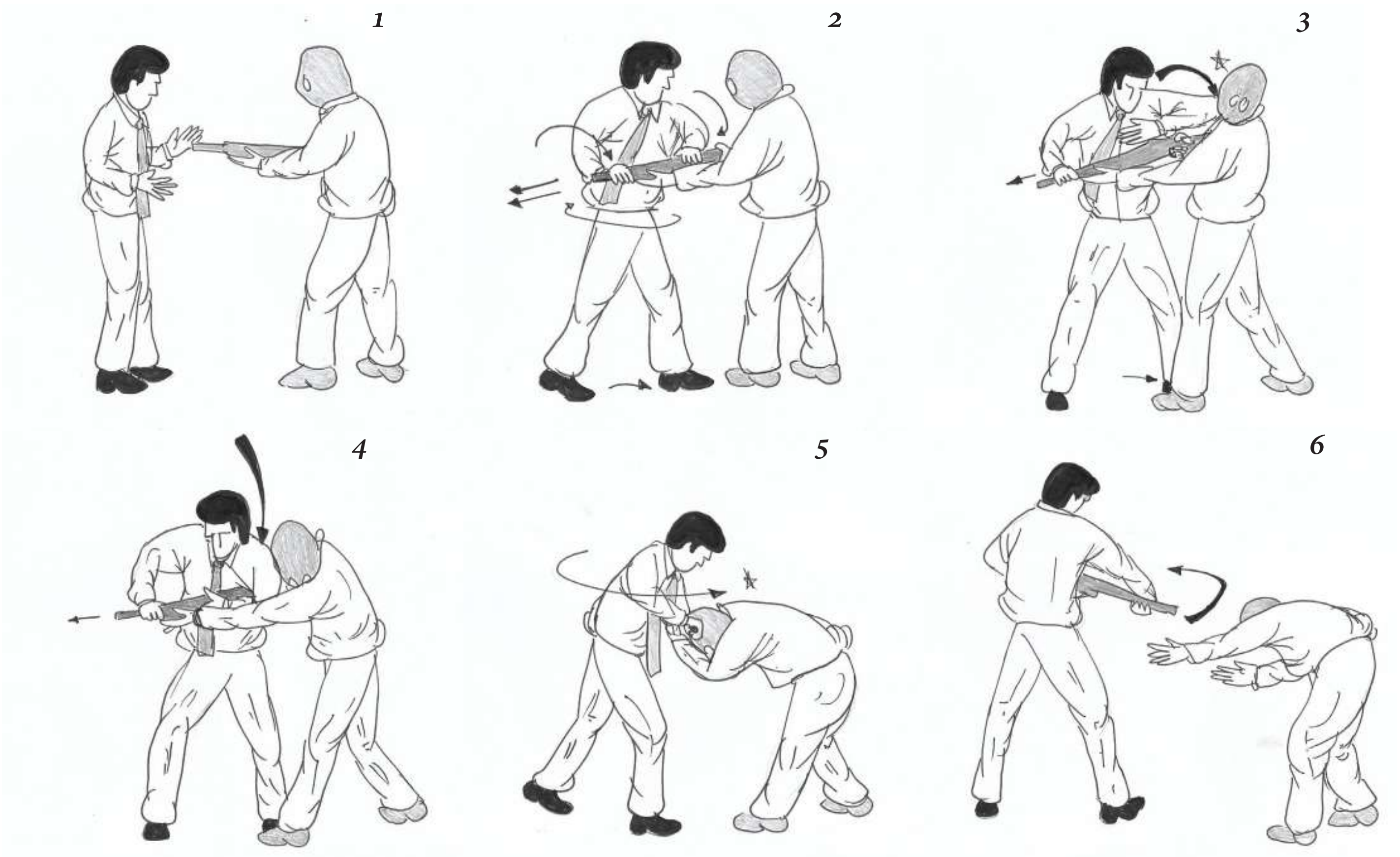




Eye Poke and Topple Takedown with twisting Disarm – effective but requiring more practice

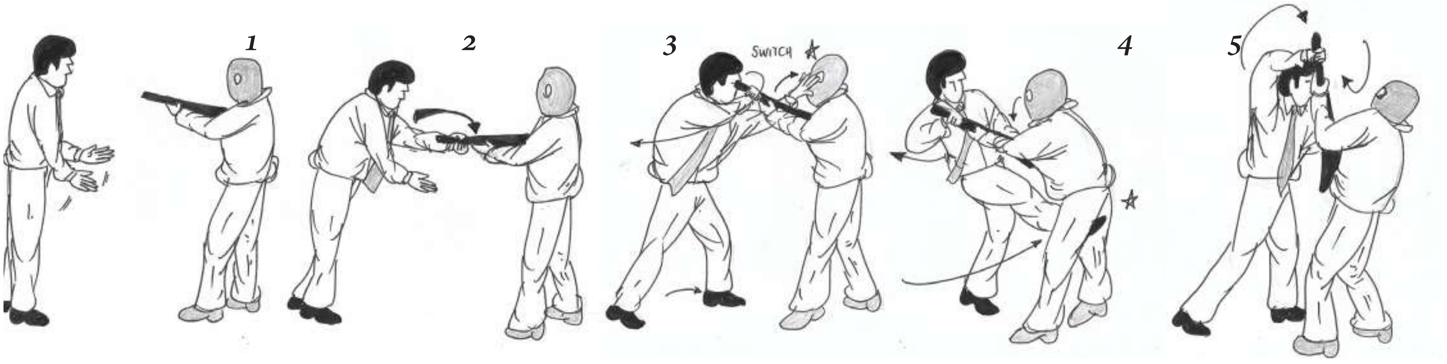
The third series is a **classic maneuver** that is important to drill a lot: it reminds the trainee of the basic principles and uses **a variation of the 'elbow fulcrum' for the Disarm**. The basic principle of being close and of controlling both the barrel and the trigger area is underlined by the *double grab and forward lunge to his in-side*. Pull the gun forward and get 'sticky' close to him. Let suddenly go of the trigger area grab to lift your elbow and strike him in the head. Your elbow is, in fact, on its way down between his arms for an elbow fulcrum point. Strike down *hard and deep* between his arms, while pulling the gun forward; this will place the trigger area of the gun below your armpit. As he resists the pull, you now twist back violently with *all your hips and arms power* to pull the gun out of his hands. If he bends down from your pull, you will also be able to hit him on the head with the gun. Follow through with your twisting pivot and take your distance.

➔



Classic elbow fulcrum twist defense; keep very close

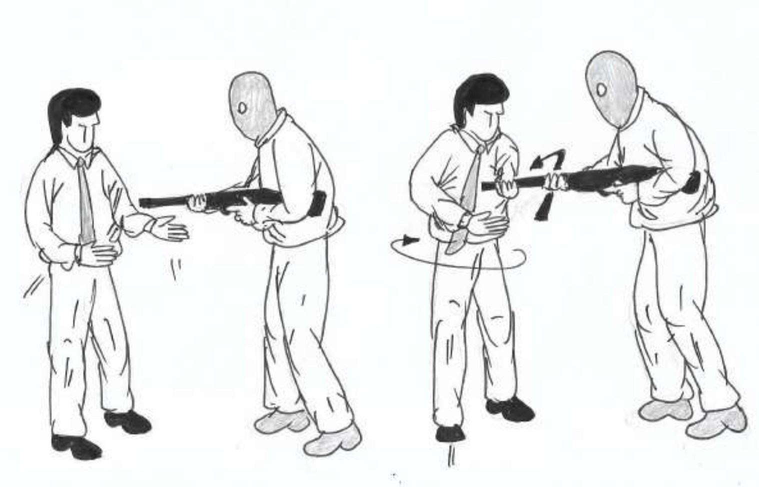
After you drill the basic techniques and get intuitively familiar with the guiding principles, you can use **'simpler' advanced techniques**. It is all about deviating and then twisting the gun out of his grab after mollifying him with an eye or a groin strike. The next set of Illustrations show how to deal in such a fashion with a slightly longer-range threat. Grab and deviate the gun barrel out before lunging in to poke his eyes. Remember to start the lunge *only after having launched the arm for the grab*: the arm movement is faster alone while the start of a lunge is easily discernible. Launch the grab first, just like for the short handgun defenses. After poking his eyes, grab the trigger area and pull the gun forward (with both hands) while kicking or kneeing his groin. He should be mollified enough for you to twist the gun, in a full circle, out of his hands.

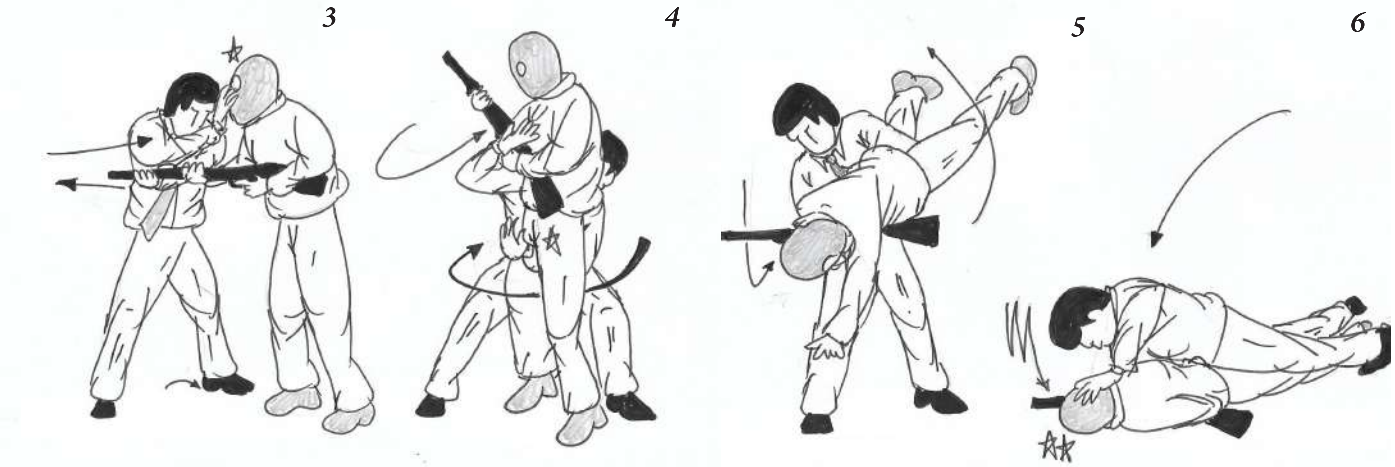


Mid-distance Long Gun Threat; grab, strike eyes and groin, twist gun. Simple technique but that requires drilling

Another approach in dealing with a long gun is to get close, throw down the assailant while going to the ground with him. By staying close, you neutralize the long gun and you can then bump the assailant's head on the floor to subdue him. These are advanced techniques that require a good level of *Krav Maga* proficiency, but they are, in essence, easy to execute. Drill them seriously, and only after having mastered the other defenses.

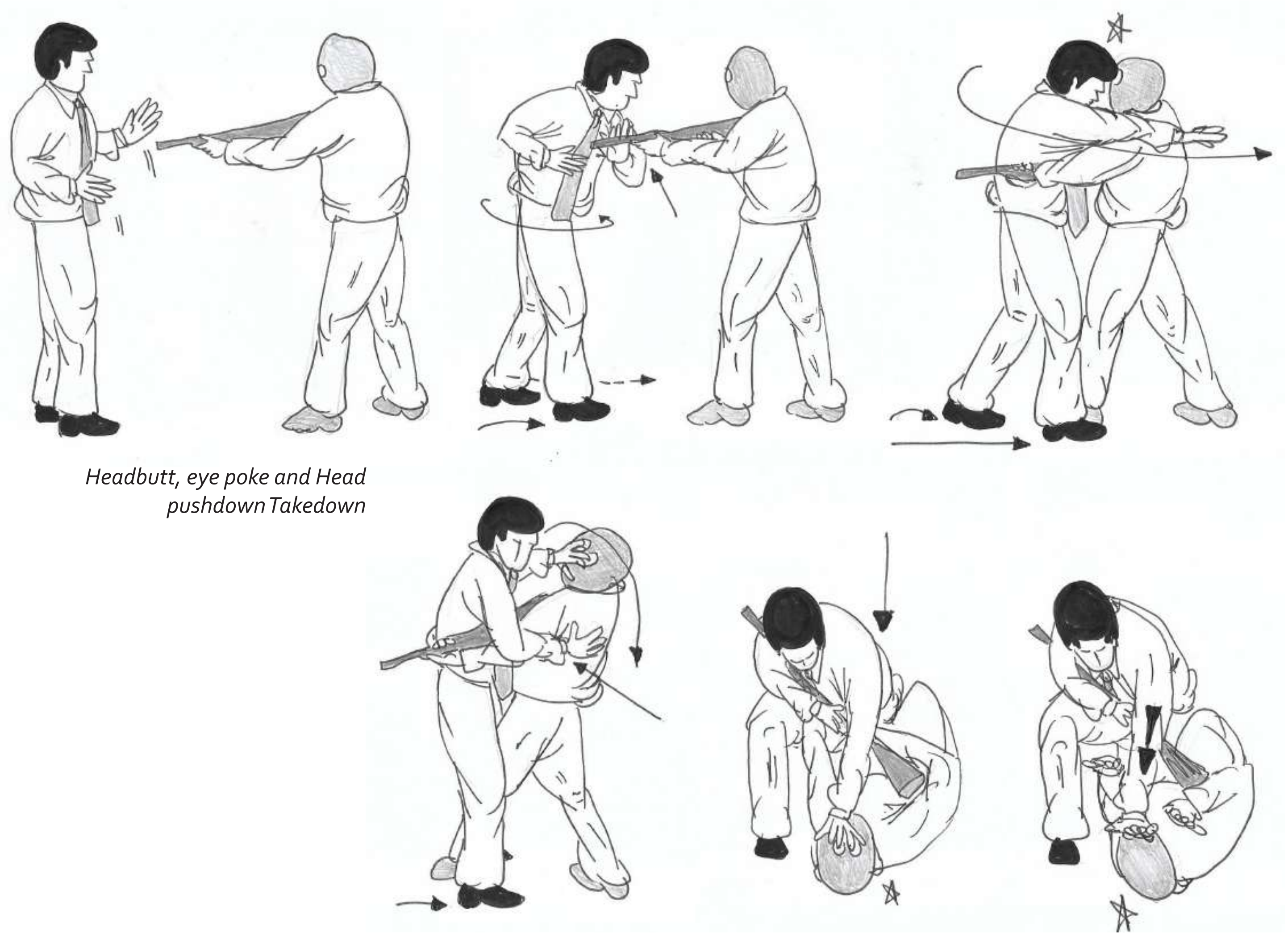
Our first example is a very effective classic. Deviate the barrel in while lunging forward with an eye attack of your 'rear' hand. Keep your lunging momentum to get behind him while your poking arm comes below the gun to push the gun against the weakened assailant's chest. The hand that used to hold the barrel can now come forward between his legs (from behind). This move is a *Strike* up in his groin for further 'softening' of his will to fight. You are, of course, crouching while keeping pressure on the gun to his chest. Your hand between his legs grabs "whatever possible" to his front groin area. Pull up while standing up straight in order to take him down. As soon as he is lifted with head down, push him down forcefully on his head and *go with him* to add your body weight on the floor crash. The gun is harmless under his body and you should immediately start striking his head and banging it on the floor until he is neutralized.





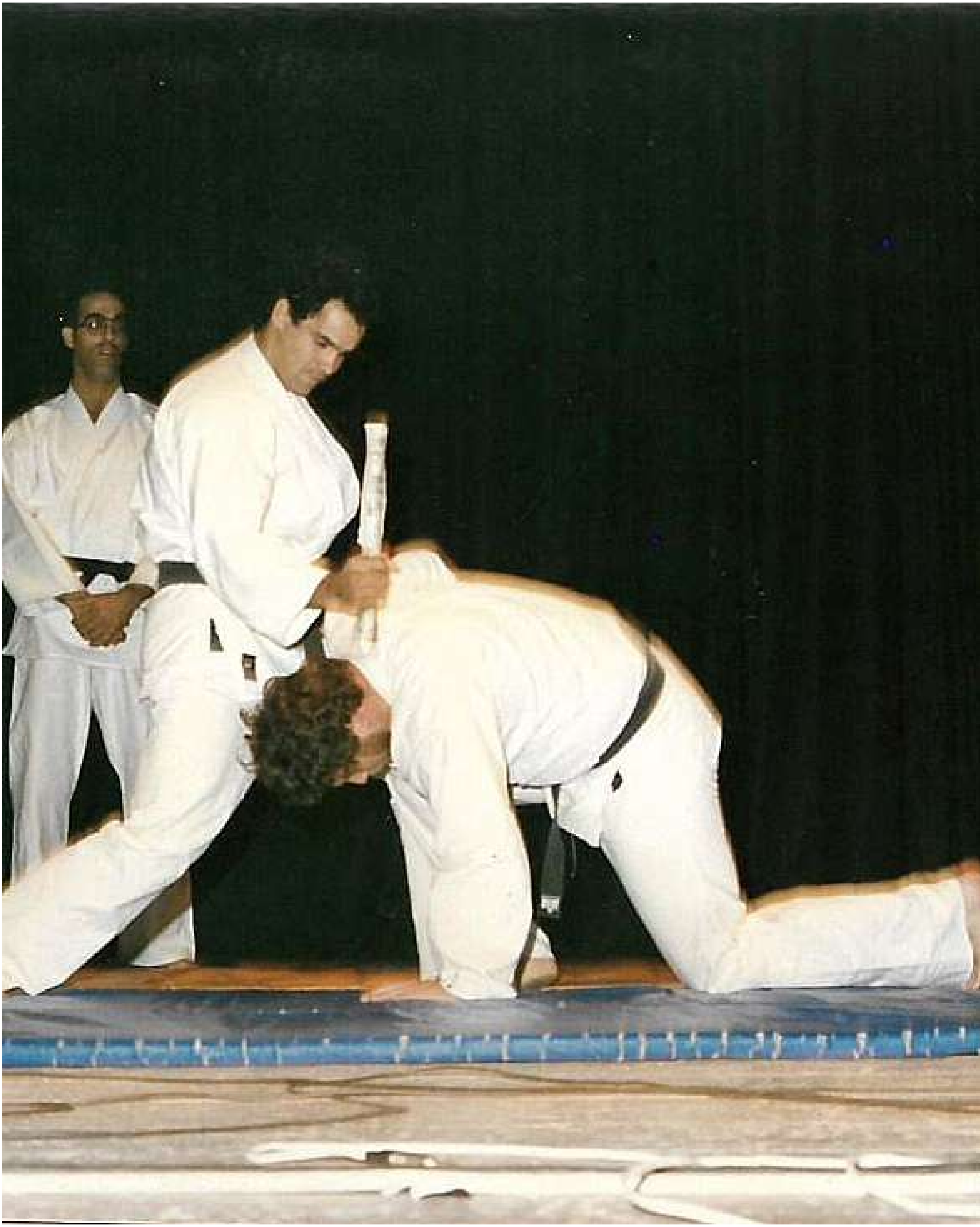
Eye poke and Groin Takedown Defense

The last Takedown Defense is illustrated below. The Drawings show how to deviate the gun barrel *out* while lunging forcefully straight into the attacker with a headbutt. Go over his barrel arm to control it and to keep the assailant close, and keep your forward momentum. Let your control hand glide into his lower back while attacking his eyes with the other hand. Take him down by pushing his head straight down with your fingers in his eyes and keeping his back in place. Push the head all the way down *into the ground*, while staying close. Keep control of his gun arms under your arm and keep banging his head hard into the floor until he is neutralized.



Headbutt, eye poke and Head pushdown Takedown

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.
~Benjamin Franklin



PART Ten

Improvised Weapons

שימוש בחפצים יומיומיים

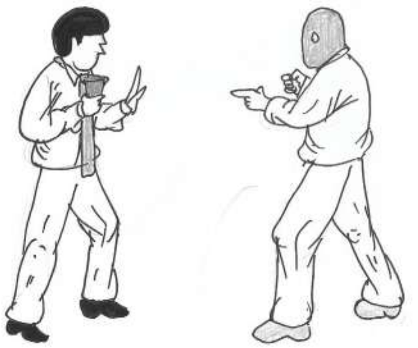
We are closing this work about *Advanced Krav Maga* with a short Chapter on **using everyday objects for self-defense**. One of the principles of *Krav Maga* is using everything around you to help you win the fight. That means getting the high ground on a stairwell as well as throwing hot coffee into the assailant's eyes. It means that banging the assailant's head against the nearby wall could be more effective than trying to punch him. The use of your surroundings should in fact be only limited by your imagination: it is more a state of mind than a collection of techniques.

We are not covering here obvious weapons, but **everyday objects** that seem innocuous but can very much improve your odds of winning a fight. A hammer, a screwdriver, a baseball bat, a cutter, a fire poker, a pepper spray, a telescopic baton or a kitchen knife are all true weapons to use if you happen to have them near you at the time. There is no need to talk about them. Let us talk about your backpack, your umbrella or your coffee to go…

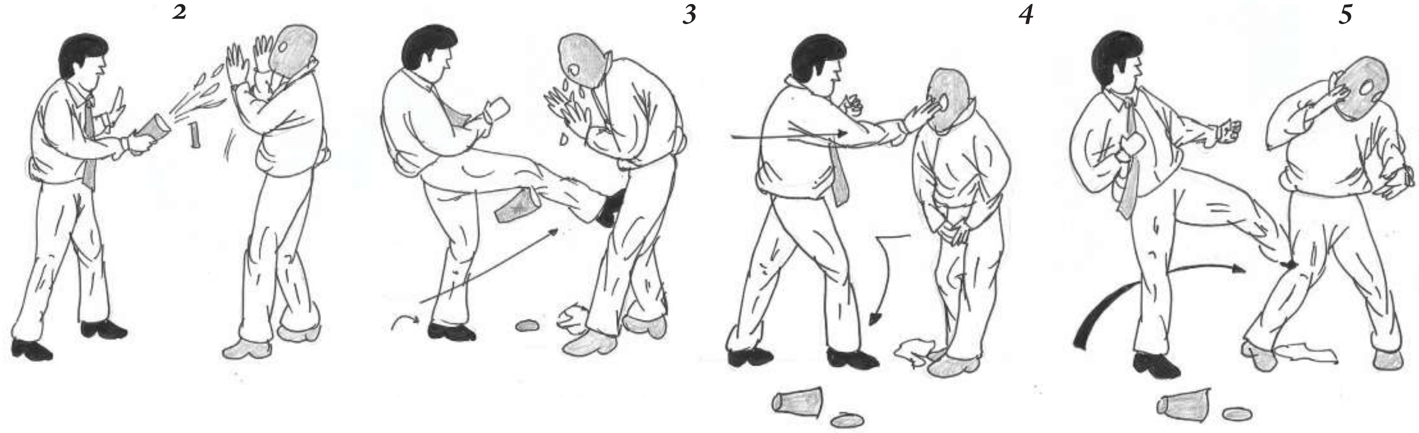
We shall only present here a few illustrations, a few techniques and a few ideas. The reader will have to do his own thinking and consider what are the objects he is usually carrying and in which surroundings he is usually moving around. It is important to visualize all this and also to practice with everyday objects. The reason is not, this time, about intensive drilling but more of having thought about it before. *In times of stress, grabbing something useful will not necessarily be straightforward and you will not be in a situation you can think and concentrate*. Think about it, use it a few times with a partner and be ready.

The first important move to always remember is the *throwing of anything possible towards the assailant's eyes*. It should always be nearly automatic in any case it is possible. Even the best trained opponent will close his eyes and lift his hands if anything is coming directly for his eyes. Even if it is only for an infinitesimal part of a second, it will allow you to launch an attack to his unprotected body; preferably to go for the groin and follow up with an eye strike as soon as he lowers his hands. From there any *Retzev* series will do. Simple, easy, efficient. Just make sure the throwing is sudden, explosive and comes directly straight towards his eyes. You can basically throw anything you have in your hands: your keys, your wallet, your bag, hot coffee, any drink, a bottle, coins from your pocket, dirt or sand you have grabbed from the floor, groceries, your smartphone (as heartbreaking it may be to some), your watch,… The list is certainly not exhaustive, and, as you can see, anything goes

The set of Drawings below illustrates the concept. In this example, you are confronted as you hold your coffee to go. It will of course work best if it is still hot! And anything else will work as well, as explained before; you just have to cause him to close his eyes and lift his hands instinctively. Our example shows that you make sure to be non-threatening while getting ready by unlocking the cup cover. If the confrontation is inevitable, explode into throwing the (hot) beverage towards his face. As he reacts atavistically, kick his groin and then attack his eyes as he lowers the hands. Start your *Retzev*, for example with a Low Kick to his front knee.

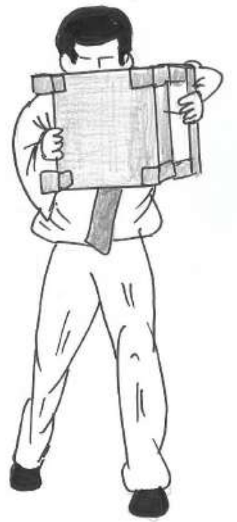


Throw anything towards the opponent's eyes and kick his groin as he lifts his hands

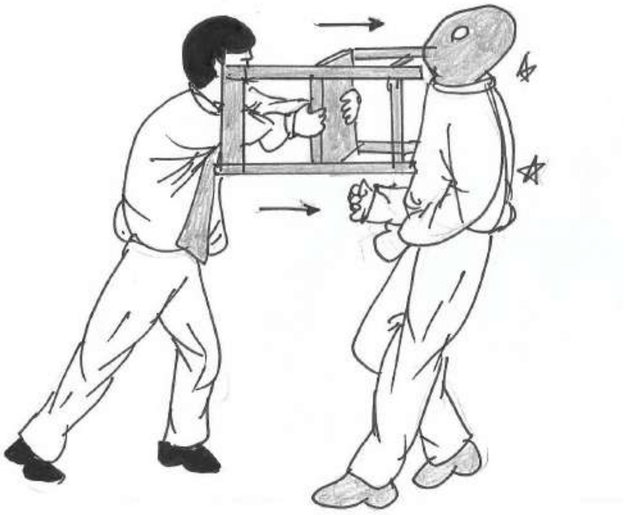


The second important object you should look for in an emergency is a chair. A **chair** is built with a seat that can be a shield against blades and strikes, and with legs that are formidable poking weapons. Of course they can be heavy and unwieldy, but you should use them for a short time, just to get the upper hand. **Chairs** and stools are everywhere, and should be used whenever possible, especially if the attacker is armed with a stick or with a knife. Grab it in any way you feel comfortable with and use the seat as a *shield* from punches, kicks or knife pokes. Use the pegs or legs as *poking weapons* against the most vulnerable spots of the assailant's body. Concentrate on one leg and aim with short poking moves towards the eyes, the throat, the nose or the solar plexus. The other legs will probably connect somewhere else as well, all for the best. DO NOT use the chair like in the movies, in wide moves aiming at crashing it on the opponent's head or back. These wide moves require momentum and are slow; they open you totally to the opponent. At most they could be used to conclude a fight that you have already won, when they can be executed with no danger of a stop strike or a counter strike.

➡



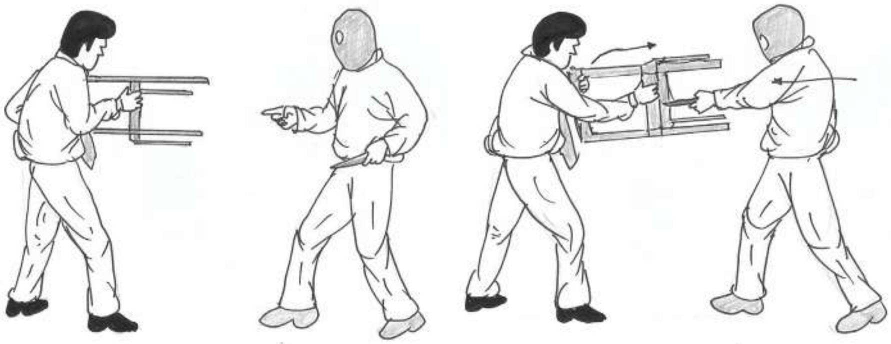
A Chair is obviously a fantastic shield

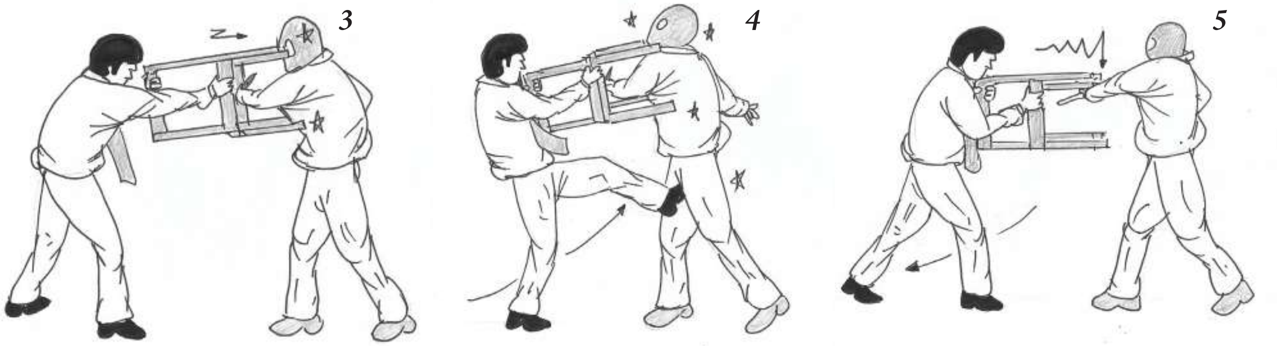


Use the chair exclusively as a poking weapon; concentrate on one peg and target the eyes, the throat or the nose

The principles are clear; you should now grab a chair from time to time and handle it just to get the feeling. You could even work a little with a partner for familiarization and hit a hanging bag with precision strikes by concentrating on one of the legs only. It will make you ready, just in case…

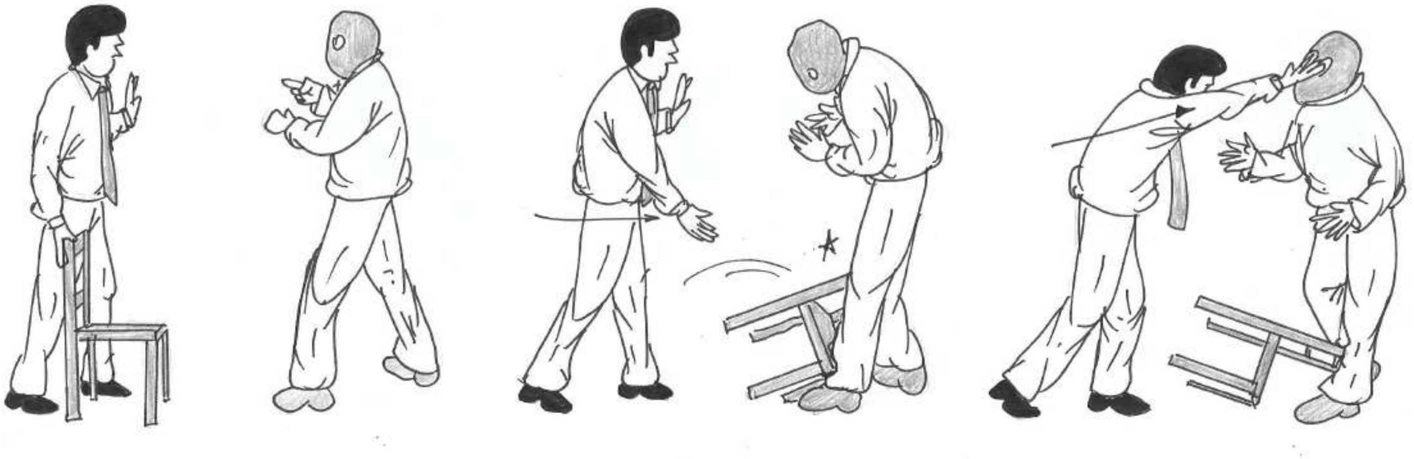
We shall now give an illustrating example of dealing with a knife. The drawings show how you are ready behind the shielding by the chair seat. Do not wait for the attack but preempt it by going forward into his approach and striking his knife directly with the seat. Keep going towards him with a series of poking moves and concentrate on one of the upper pegs for targeting the eyes. As he is hit, lift the chair (and his hand as well) just enough to kick him in the groin for good measure. You can now use the chair legs to hit his armed arm repeatedly up and down to hurt the elbow. From there on you should repeat your forward poking attacks towards sensitive points of his body. You can also eventually relinquish the chair at some stage to go for more traditional *Krav Maga* techniques.





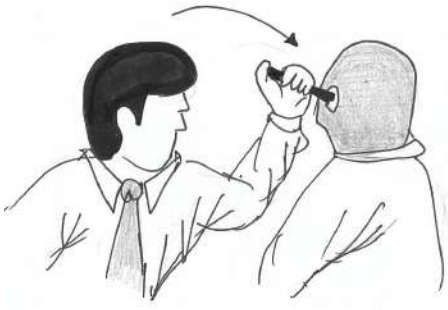
Using a chair to deal with an approaching knife-wielding assailant

We shall conclude by mentioning that a chair can also be used *as an obstructing diversion* in a very easy move. This trick is incredibly effective and very easy to succeed with; *the key is to conceal your intentions* by being non-threatening and unobvious in your preparations. As illustrated below, you stand near one of those ubiquitous chairs, or maybe beside the chair you were just sitting on before being confronted. As your assailant gets close, you suddenly push the chair down into his legs. No need to use force or big moves, just push it down unobtrusively, but suddenly. As soon as he is struck and stuck, lunge for his eyes. Go around the chair to keep striking in your own *Retzev*.



Tilt a chair into the legs of an approaching assailant and attack his eyes as he concentrates down

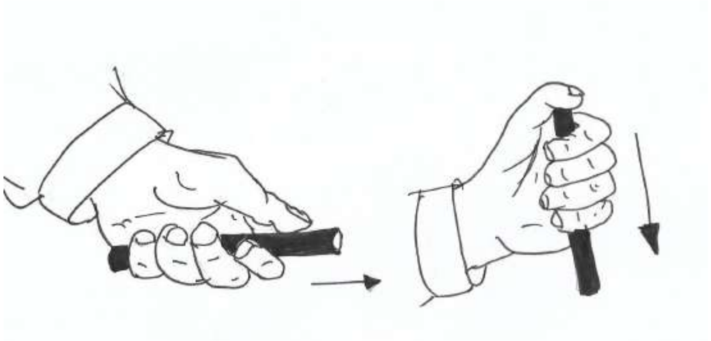
Another very useful everyday object for self-defense is a pen or anything hard that looks like it. Pens and pencils are everywhere, and you maybe even have one on you right now. But hardly a weapon shall you say? Just think about the effect of a pen strike into the eye, and you'll be on board…

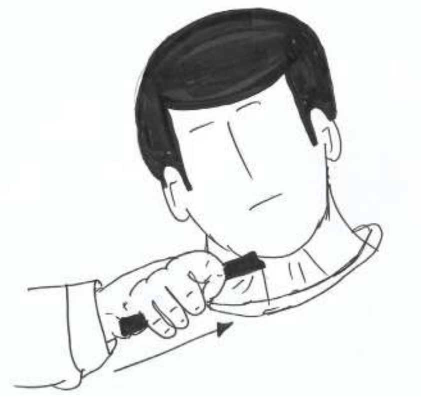


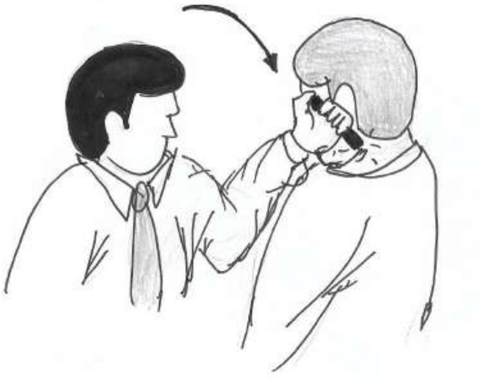
Of course, it may seem an overreaction and an even something unthinkable for a normative citizen. But one must remember that *Krav Maga* is about survival in extreme circumstances. Poking someone's eye is both gross and extreme. Of course, you will not attack the eyes of your drunken friend because he pushed you. *These techniques are about situations in which your life or physical integrity are at risk from criminals or terrorists*. This is not even about dealing with a purse grabber or a drunk; this is about *survival*. And in that case, you will have to be ready to do what is necessary to protect yourself. We have dealt with the morals of self-defense and the imperative of self-control at the beginning of the book. Pen techniques are gruesome and dangerous and should be used only in last resort. The reason is simple: *they only target the eyes, the throat and the carotid!*

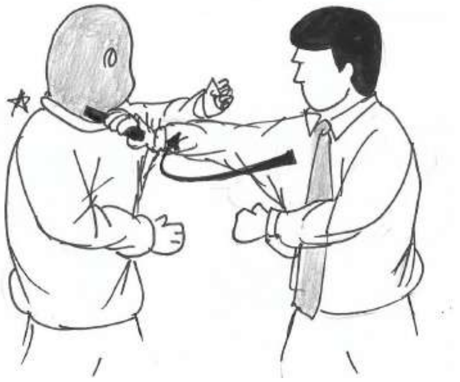
The pen can be held normally to strike, but the preferable handle for stronger strikes is the 'Icepick' grip.

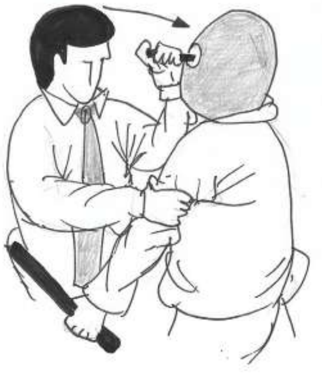
Strike, preferably repeatedly, the throat (on the side of the trachea), the side of the neck downward, the side of the neck horizontally, and the eyes. These must be crippling strikes for extreme situations. Think of the pen as a mini-knife and make *penetrating strikes*. Get psychologically ready for such a violent and unusual behavior, in case you get into a dire situation requiring it. It is not as easy as it may seem; most people recoil at the thought of such tactics.


The regular and Icepick grip for pen strikes


Attack the Adam's apple by coming sideways below it

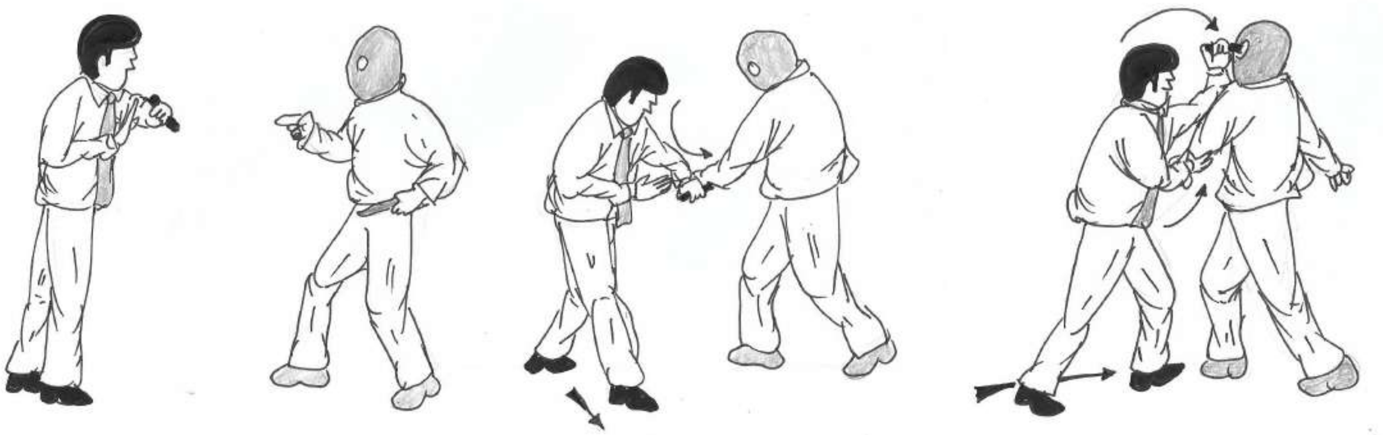

Strike the side of the neck diagonally downwards to hurt the carotid and nerve endings


Strike the carotid directly in a horizontal strike; aim for the side of the neck


But the eye should always be target number one in life or death situations

And we shall **conclude with an example** that embodies the principles presented. See Illustrations at the top of next page. The Drawings show how you hold your pen in an *Icepick Grip* when confronted by a knife-wielding assailant. After downward-blocking a stab, you get control of the armed arm with the other hand and go for a Downward Strike to the assailant's *eye*. Totally justified.

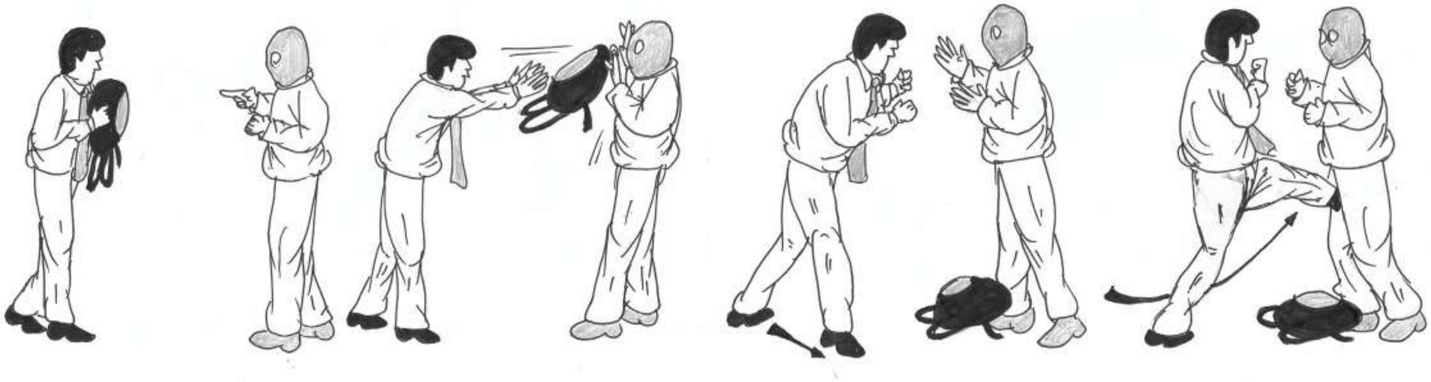
➡



Icepick pen grip, block a knife stab and go for the eyes

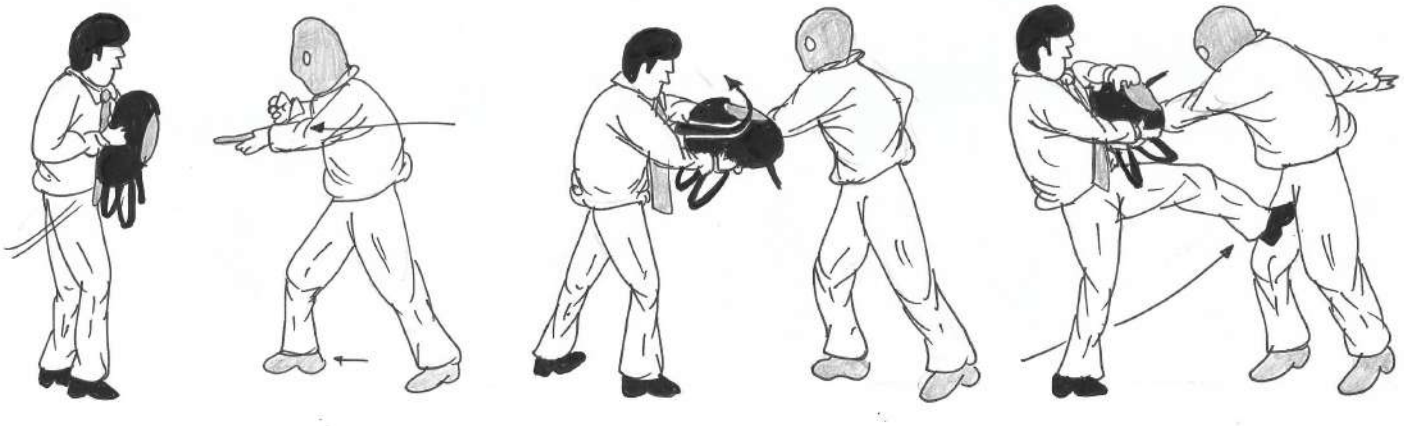
Another useful everyday item is your bag. Whether a sport bag, a backpack, an attaché-case or a bag of groceries, you can use it as a shield or as a diversion. You could use it to strike the opponent, but unless it is weighted, it will probably not do much more harm than regular strikes that you can deliver. Although it must be said that the centrifugal force of wide moves can make it fearsome (*at the cost of the predictability of wide strikes*).
The author advises to restrict the use of such items for *shielding and diversion*, which simple principles will be illustrated below.

The first set of drawings shows how to **suddenly throw your back towards the opponent's eyes**. Start unexpectedly from a non-threatening and cowed stance to surprise him; explode into an energetic throw. As soon as you have thrown the bag, *get out of the center-line* by stepping diagonally forward. This is to evade a possible reaction. Immediately kick his groin as he is still unsettled by the high strike, as he still has his hands reflexively up or as he has your bag hindering his feet movements. From there, start a regular *Retzev*.



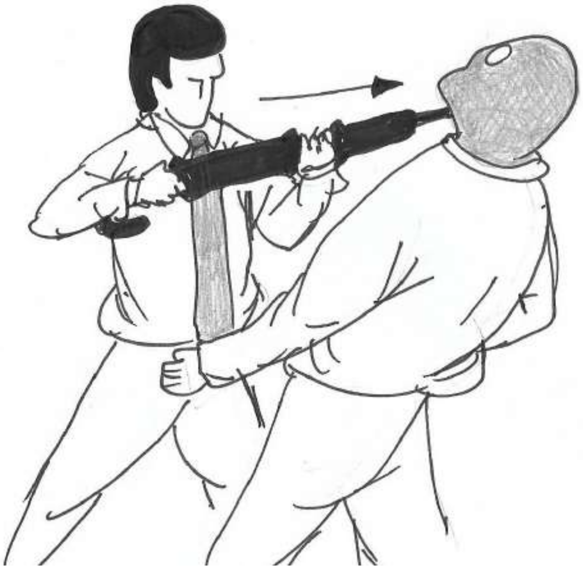
Throw your bag towards the assailant's eyes in order to allow for a groin kick

The second set of Drawings illustrates how to use a backpack **as a shield** to smother a knife stab. Deviate the knife and use its cover to kick the attacker's groin. The shield use of any bag is obvious but should be thought about for familiarization.

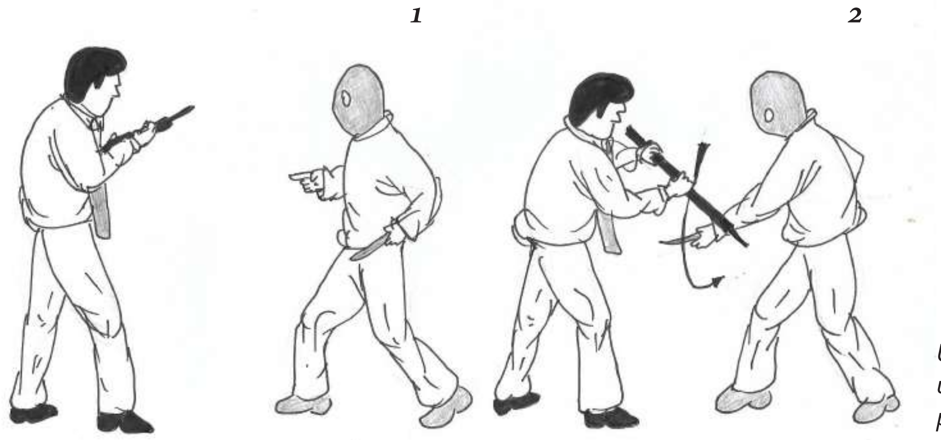


Use a bag as a smothering and deviating shield against a knife attack

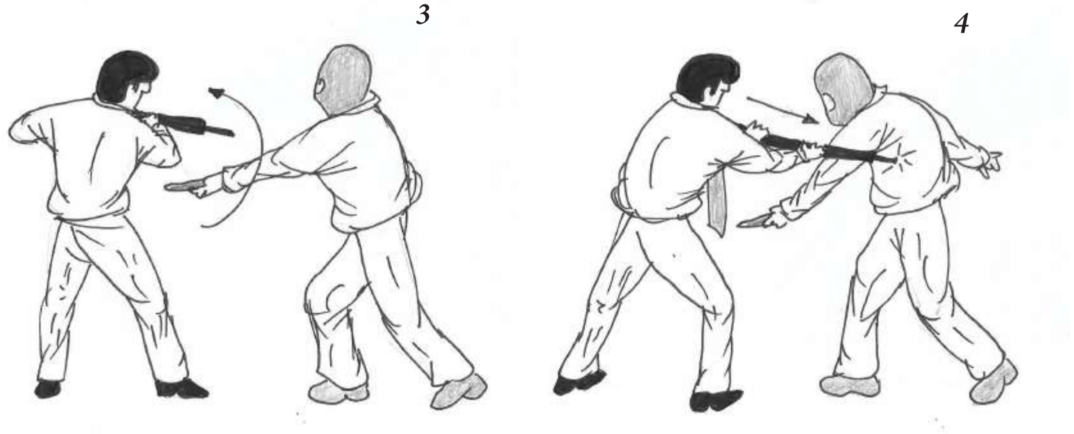
Another excellent improvised weapon in case of need: the umbrella. We mean here the **long umbrella with a pointed tip**, not the short 'pocket-type'. The umbrella should not be used as a stick, but, again, as a *poking weapon* and hold with *one hand at the end and one hand in the middle* (as it is rather flimsy). *Krav Maga* is about maximum efficiency for your own safety, and hitting someone on the head with a flimsy umbrella will not do much damage. Even if you have a sturdier walking stick, wielding it around will only be efficient if you are an experimented fighter of cane fighting (*Arnis, Jo jitsu* or French '*canne*'). So concentrate on simple moves and maximum damage by *poking at sensitive points*. In life-threatening situations, you should preferably aim for the eyes or the throat. Again. But the pointed tip and the way you hold it can also do lots of damage if directed to the abdomen or the groin. Poke, poke away repeatedly and your assailant will probably go and look for an easier prey. The next set of Figures *at the top of next page* illustrates the possible dealing with a surprise knife attack. Block and deviate energetically the threatening knife hand with the umbrella and immediately poke his uncovered side with all your power. Think of a penetrating bayonet strike.



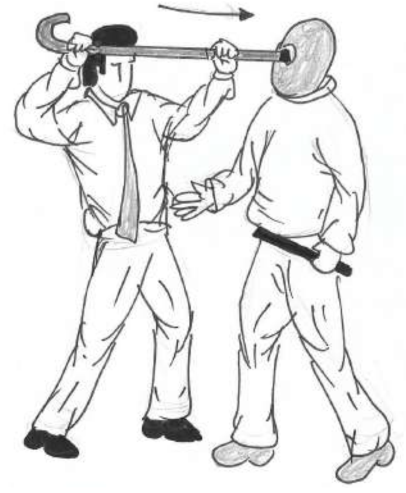
Poke the assailant's throat with the pointed tip of the umbrella held with both hands



Use the pointed tip of the umbrella for powerful penetrating strikes to the face or the abdomen of an attacker



A sturdy walking stick can be used in the same way as the umbrella; the lack of pointedness is balanced by the stronger stick. As mentioned, use it also as a *poking weapon held by two hands* as described (unless you are a proficient stick fighter). Always prefer the eyes and throat as targets, if possible.



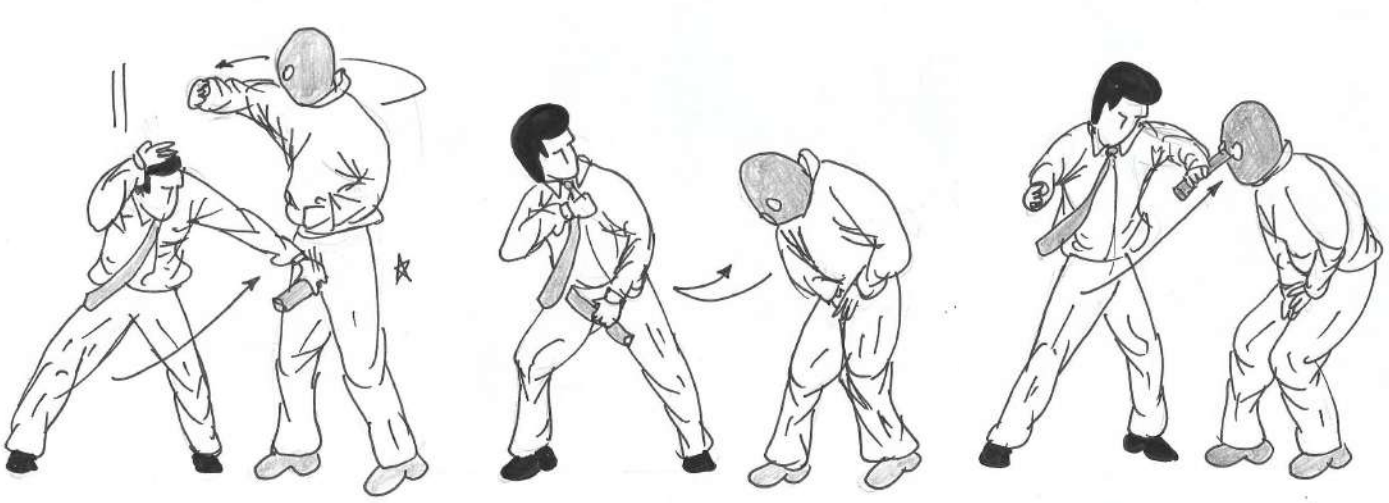
Use a walking stick just as an umbrella: go for the eyes and throat

The shorter umbrella is also an option, as is a rolled magazine or a plastic bottle which have all the same basic ‘short stick’ shape. Anything that looks like a short stick (*Tam bo*) can be used as a weapon: the short umbrella already mentioned, a plastic sports water bottle, a tightly rolled magazine, a small glass bottle,...

➡

The author does *not* recommend to use all those as you would a stick, as is sometimes touted. These items are not hard or strong enough to inflict serious pain to an adrenalin-filled opponent. Again, you should use those exclusively as *poking weapons to be directed at very sensitive targets*: eyes, throat and groin. Eventually, if you are strong and in control, the solar plexus and the nose could be targeted as well with strikes that would anyway need follow-up.
You should hold the makeshift weapon in such a way that you can use both extremities to strike according to the situation. So, do not hold the umbrella or the rolled magazine at one end, but better somewhere at a third of its length.

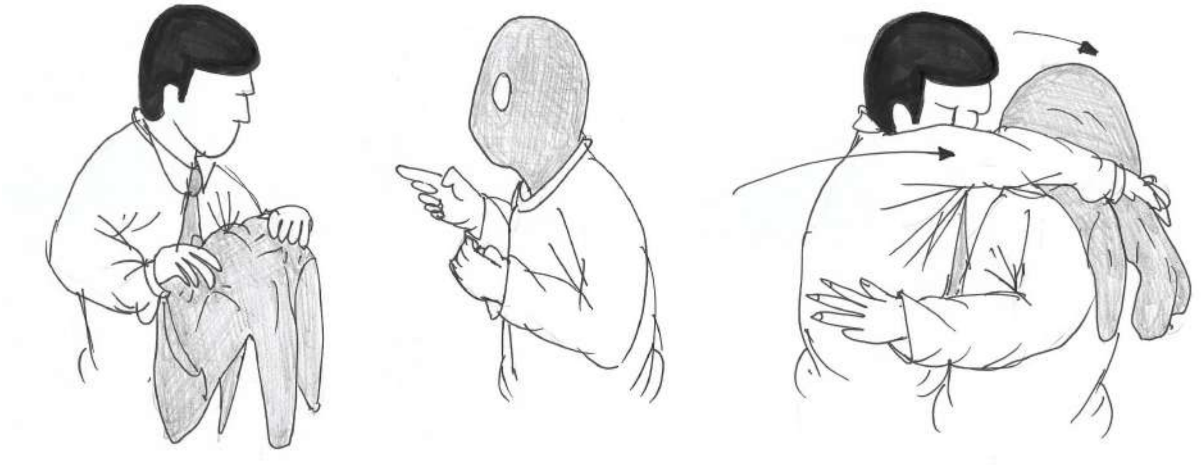
The Illustrations below show how you could strike the groin of an attacker launching a Haywire punch that you evade down. Follow up with another 'short stick' strike to the eye before starting your *Retzev*.



Use a short umbrella or a rolled magazine to strike the groin and face of an attacker

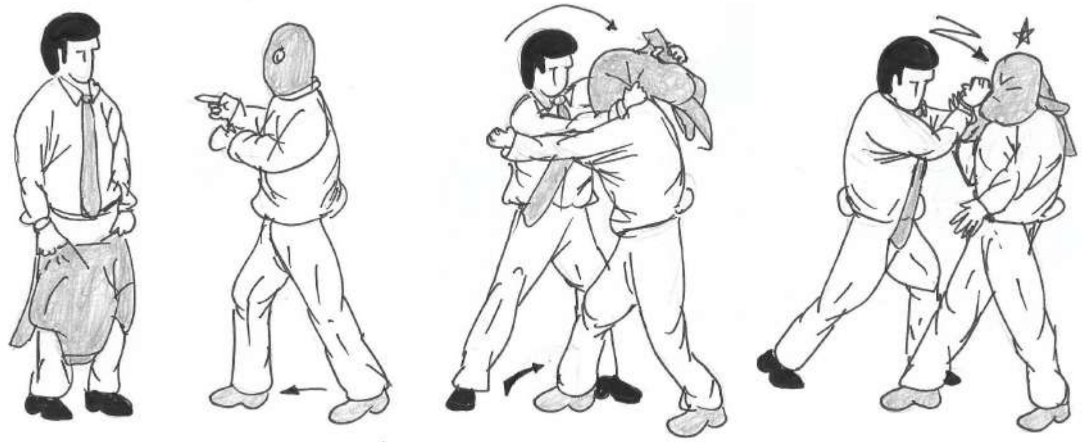
A surprising improvised weapon would be the jacket that is on your back. Of course, you would need to be holding it. If you have something of some weight in your pocket, it could eventually be used as a whip to strike the opponent's head. But it is best used *as a diversion or/and as a blinding tool*. Throw it over the attacker's head as he gets close and immediately attack as he is both encumbered and blinded; go for the head or the groin and start a *Retzev*. Even if the assailant can get rid of your jacket or avoid his head being covered, his dealing with it will divert his attention from your incoming strikes and kicks.

➡



Cover the opponent's head with your jacket to blind him and distract him from your counter

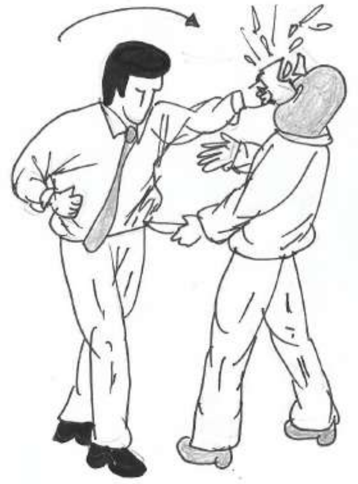
The Figures below illustrate how you cover your attacker's head with a garment and tighten it enough to keep him blinded while you hammer-fist repeatedly the area where his nose should be. You can then attack his groin as he deals with both your jacket and his busted face.



Cover the attacker's face and try to tighten the cover for enough time to strike his nose area a few times

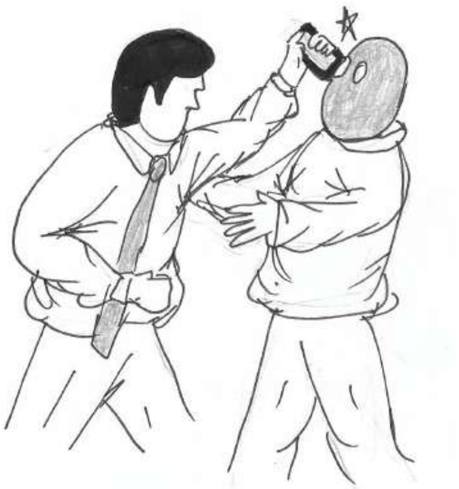
But remember that many other everyday objects can be used as improvised weapons according to the general principles covered in the previous examples. Look around you and your specific settings; think about it and imagine what could be grabbed in a time of need.
We will conclude with two more random examples.
If you are holding a ceramic mug, a glass, a glass bottle, a coffee pot or a decanter, what simpler than to break it on the assailant's head? Of course, keep striking after that until the threat is over

➔



Use anything of glass or ceramic and crash it on the opponent's head as the start of a Retzev

Our last example will be anathema to many readers, in this day and age of constant connection, selfies and social media. But striking the opponent's eye,head or face with the **hard edge of your smartphone** could help you win the fight. Think about it; it could be worth it…



We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, therefore is not an action but a habit.
~Aristotle

AFTERWORD

We have now covered the important *Krav Maga* techniques. But the work starts only now. “Knowing” the techniques and having practiced them a few times does not mean you have acquired them. In the real-life situation in which you could need them, it is only your muscle memory and instinctive reactions that will save you.

You will need to drill intensively all the techniques presented. Then, by practicing them in a ‘free fighting’ setting, you will be able to ‘feel’ the versions the most adapted to your temperament and physiology. It will then be time to focus on those techniques in order to make them quasi-automatic. Drill, drill and drill. Drill with a less-and-less cooperative partner, drill under stress and against several partners. Slowly and gradually, these reactions will become truly acquired and available for stress situations without having to think about them. But it will not be over yet! You now will have to keep drilling them from time to time, in order to keep them fresh in your mind and body.

You should drill the kicks and strikes presented in the first part of the book. Perfect the technique and shadow-strike by series of 10. Once the technique is familiar, you should increase speed while shadow-kicking, and start working for power. You should start hitting hanging bags, standing bags, old tires, focus pads and body shields. It is of primary importance to focus on where you are aiming, even when shadow-boxing and in hitting the bag: the knee is not the same height as the thigh, and it is the knee that is the target. The chest is not the floating ribs area. Be conscious of what you are aiming for. You can then start working with a protected partner and start kicking fast, but not at maximum power. Learn to kick somebody who is moving and to concentrate on the specific target.

When you start drilling the ***self-defense series***, execute them as presented and slowly. Get familiar with the moves and understand the flow and its probable reasons. Increase speed gradually with familiarity and proficiency. At the beginning, please do follow the *Retzev* moves presented. And drill them many times. In times of stress, like a real-world aggression, it is your body that must take over, intuitively basing itself on the **muscular memory**. If you have to think about what to do, it means that you have not drilled enough and that you are losing the fight. Drill and drill and drill. When you become proficient, your body will decide by itself which of the Retzev moves are better adapted to the situation and to your affinities. And you are on your way…

Once you have mastered the techniques and their follow-ups, comes the real work. You will need to have your partner 'resist' gradually more to your releases and maneuvers. In real life, your opponent will not stay idle while you react; you have to get used to it. The key word here is: *gradually*. You need a partner with sensitivity: resisting a little bit more, but still let you execute the whole maneuver. Gradually with time, he will make his attacks real attacks, full on, with no 'presents' for you. Thank him, because he is truly helping you. The next steps are as important. Your partner will attack you 'all out' and choosing one specific attack among several possible. You will not know which, so be ready.

The last stage is as important, but really difficult. You'll need another partner or two. While you drill all the exercises presented above, the additional partner(s) will shout at you and push you around while you are defending yourself against the main partner. This additional stress is there to teach you focus and stress management. These training methods are, in fact, the real 'secrets' of *Krav Maga* efficacy. The rest is just KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid).
Now is time to go and sweat...

Krav Maga and the will to survive 'just in case' are in fact, a life commitment requiring work and more work. A lot of intensive training *now* will not be an insurance policy for the next 20 years. Consistent and regular training is much more effective than intensive training. Keep training and the fruits will be yours to pick.

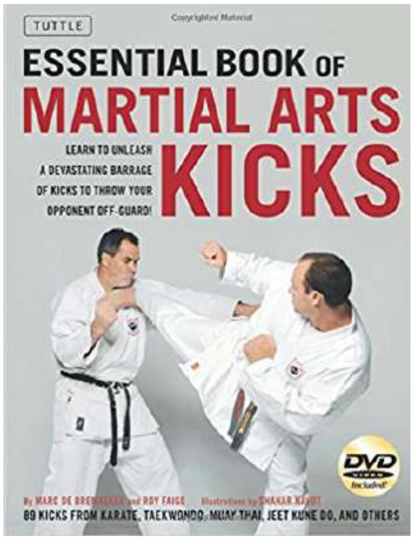
Good Luck and remember the main basic principles of Krav Maga:

- **Attack preemptively or Counterattack as early as possible**
- **Keep an offensive attitude.**
- **Target the body's most vulnerable points**
- **Maximize efficiency for fast neutralization.**
- **Use offensive defense**
- **Maintain constant awareness of the battlefield**
- **Retzev: Keep striking with no interruption until full victory**

If you have enjoyed the book and appreciate the effort behind this series, you are invited to write a short and honest review on Amazon.com...It has become extremely difficult to promote one's work in this day and age, and your support would be much appreciated. Thanks!

All questions, comments, additional techniques, special or vintage Photos about Kicks and Krav Maga are welcomed by the author and would be introduced with credit in future editions. Just email:**martialartkicks@gmail.com**

Books by the same author are presented in the coming pages.


TUTTLE
Copyrighted Material
ESSENTIAL BOOK OF
MARTIAL ARTS
KICKS
LEARN TO UNLEASH A DEVASTATING BARRAGE OF KICKS TO THROW YOUR OPPONENT OFF-GUARD!
DVD Included
89 KICKS FROM KARATE, TAEKWONDO, MUAY THAI, JEET KUNE DO, AND OTHERS

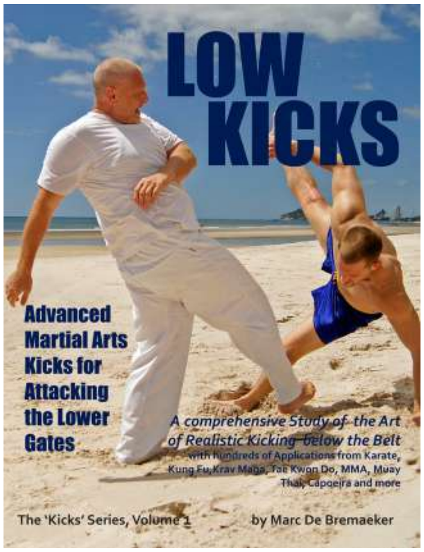
Published by TUTTLE.

This illustrated guide to martial arts kicks provides the reader with a wealth of information on 89 different types of kicks from various styles. This martial arts book features kicks from Karate, Muay Thai, Taekwondo, Kung Fu, Kempo, Capoeira, Jeet Kune Do, and more. In a self defense situation there is no room for defeat. Readers will learn how to unleash a devastating barrage of kicks to throw their opponents off guard and leave every match in victory.

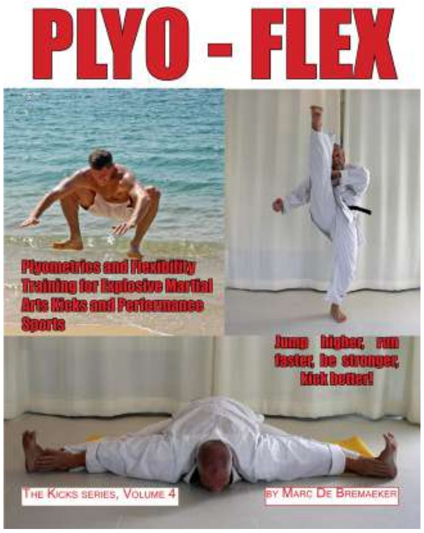
The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks has one purpose: to help readers hone their kicking proficiency so that they can readily deploy the most powerful tool in the fighter's repertoire. It contains contains thousands of photos and diagrams to show readers exactly how to perform all of the 89 kicks inside this book.

This encyclopedic reference is the first of its kind to present the entire range of basic martial arts kicks. Packed with full color photos, detailed diagrams and a companion DVD featuring 50 of the most powerful kicks, this book is required reading for every martial artist who wants to sharpen and expand their kicking skills.

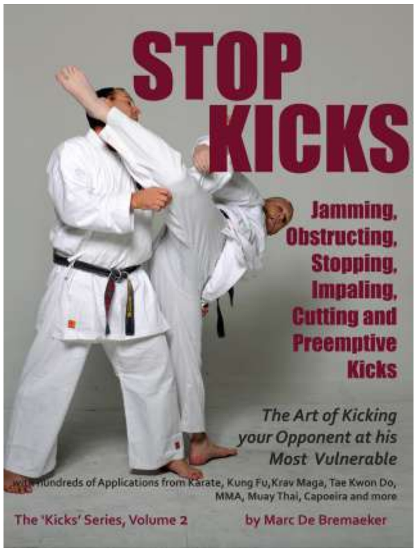
Published by Fons Sapientiae:


LOW
KICKS
Advanced
Martial Arts
Kicks for
Attacking
the Lower
Gates
A comprehensive Study of the Art
of Realistic Kicking below the Belt
with hundreds of Applications from Karate,
Kung Fu, Krav Maga, Tae Kwon Do, MMA, Muay
Thai, Capoeira and more
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 1
by Marc De Bremaeker

Low Kicks are powerful, fast, and effective exactly what you need to defend yourself in a real life confrontation. And because they are seldom used in sport fighting, they can be a surprising and valuable addition to your free fighting arsenal. While they may seem easy to execute, not all low kicks are simply low versions of the basic kicks. There are specific attributes and principles that make low kicks work. Marc de Bremaeker has collected the most effective low kicking techniques from Martial Arts like *Krav Maga, Karatedo, Capoeira, Wing-Chun Kung-Fu, MMA*, and *Muay Thai*. In this book, he analyzes each kick in depth, explaining the proper execution and outlining applications and variations from self-defense, sport fighting and traditional practice: Hundreds of examples in over one thousand photographs and drawings.

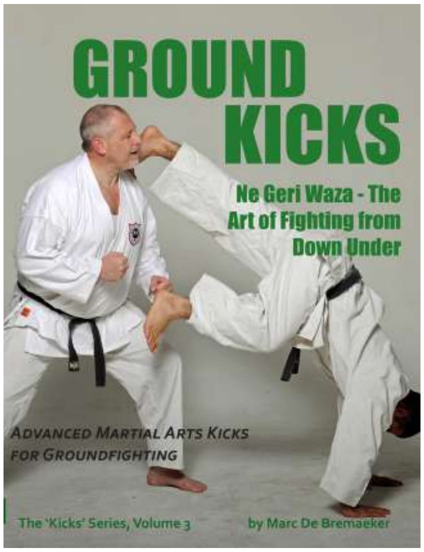

PLYO - FLEX
Plyometrics and Flexibility
Training for Explosive Martial
Arts Kicks and Performance
Sports
Jump higher, run
faster, be stronger,
kick better!
THE KICKS SERIES, VOLUME 4
BY MARC DE BREMAEKER

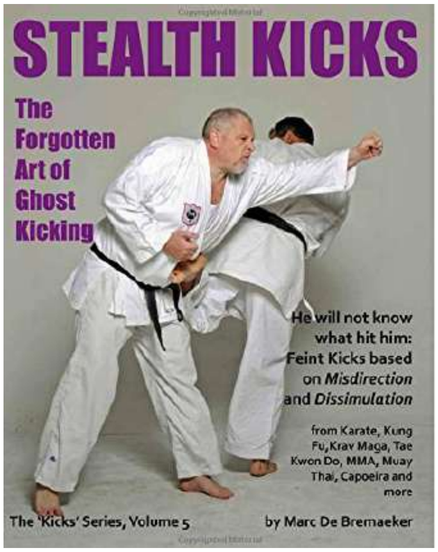
Plyometrics and Flexibility Training for Explosive Martial Arts Kicks and Performance Sports Plyo-Flex is a system of plyometric exercises and intensive flexibility training designed to increase your kicking power, speed, flexibility and skill level. Based on scientific principles, Plyo-Flex exercises will boost your muscles, joints and nervous system interfaces to the next performance level. After only a few weeks of training, you should see a marked improvement in the speed of your kicks and footwork, the power of your kicks, the height of your jumps, your stamina and your overall flexibility. Hundreds of illustrations and photographs will guide you through the basic plyometric and stretching exercises. Once you've mastered the basics, add the kicking-oriented variations to your workout for an extra challenge.


STOP
KICKS
Jamming,
Obstructing,
Stopping,
Impaling,
Cutting and
Preemptive
Kicks
The Art of Kicking
your Opponent at his
Most Vulnerable
with hundreds of Applications from Karate, Kung Fu, Krav Maga, Tae Kwon Do,
MMA, Muay Thai, Capoeira and more
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 2
by Marc De Bremaeker

Stop Kicks are among the most effective, sophisticated kicks a fighter can use. And because they hit your opponent at his most vulnerable, they are also the safest way to pre-empt or counter an attack. Stop Kicks are delivered just as your opponent is fully committed to an attack, physically or mentally, meaning it is too late for him to change his mind. Hitting an opponent in mid-attack gives you the added advantage of using his attacking momentum against him. Stop Kicks: Jamming, Obstructing, Stopping, Impaling, Cutting and Preemptive Kicks presents a well organized array of stop-kicking techniques from a wide range of martial arts. Learn Pushing Kicks, Timing Kicks, Cutting Kicks, Obstruction Kicks, and Block Kicks from the hard-hitting styles of Muay Thai, Karatedo, Krav Maga, Tae Kwon Do, MMA and more.

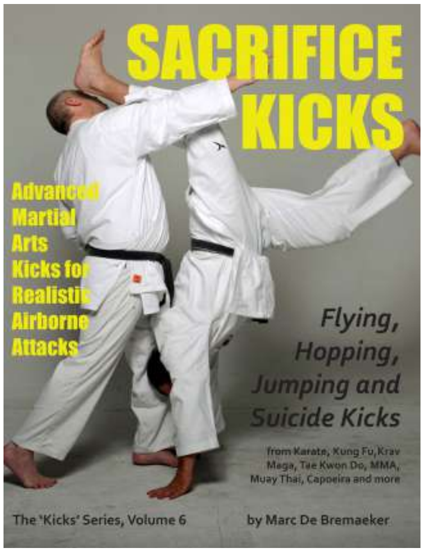
Whether you are on the ground by choice or you have been taken down, whether your opponent is standing or is on the ground with you, whether you are a good grappler or you are trying to keep a good grappler at bay, whether you were caught unawares sitting on the floor or you have evaded down on purpose, whether you are a beginner or an experienced martial artist...this book has the right kick for the situation. In **Ground Kicks**: Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Ground-fighting from Karate, Krav Maga, MMA, Capoeira, Kung Fu and more, Marc De Bremaeker has created a comprehensive collection of Ground Kicks, with hundreds of applications for sport fighting and self-defense situation. Packed with over 1200 photographs and illustrations, Ground Kicks also includes specific training tips for practicing each kick effectively.

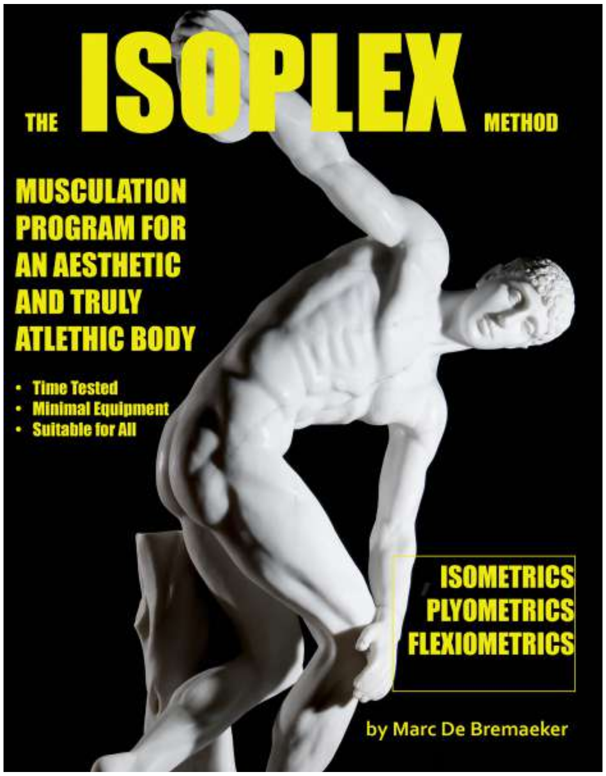

GROUND KICKS
Ne Geri Waza - The Art of Fighting from Down Under
Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Groundfighting
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 3
by Marc De Bremaeker


STEALTH KICKS
The Forgotten Art of Ghost Kicking
He will not know what hit him: Feint Kicks based on Misdirection and Dissimulation
from Karate, Kung Fu, Krav Maga, Tae Kwon Do, MMA, Muay Thai, Capoeira and more
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 5
by Marc De Bremaeker

Stealth Kicks will introduce you to the Art of executing Kicks that your opponent will not see coming. This subject has never been treated comprehensively before. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced Artist, you will find suitable Kicks or tips to modify your current techniques to give them stealth. It will help you to score in Sport confrontations or make sure to come on top in real life Self-Defense situations. The *Feint Kicks* presented are based on misdirection: they will aim at provoking a misguided reaction that will open your adversary to the real kick intended. The *Ghost Kicks* presented are based on dissimulation and will travel out of your opponent's range of vision to catch him unawares. Together with general feinting techniques and specific training tips, hundreds of applications will introduce you to the sneaky Art of stealth kicking and will make you a better and unpredictable fighter. Crammed with over 2300 photos and drawings for an easy understanding of the concept of Stealth.

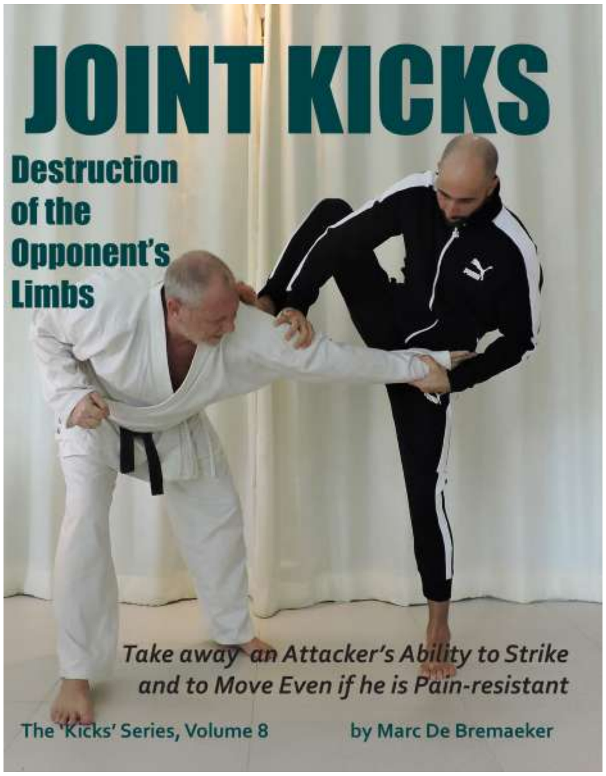
'Sacrifice Kicks' will comprehensively present the most important Martial Arts Airborne Kicks: Flying Kicks, Hopping Kicks, Jumping Kicks and Suicide Kicks. They have been dubbed 'Sacrifice' in the spirit of Judo's redoubtable Sutemi Takedowns in which one sacrifices his balance in order to throw his opponent down. *Flying Kicks* are not about showmanship, they are very effective techniques when used judiciously. They need not be necessarily high and spectacular; they can be surprising *Jumping Kicks* and *Hopping Kicks* executed long and low. And *Suicide Kicks* take the Sacrifice principles a little further: they are extremely unexpected techniques delivered airborne, but with little hope of landing on one's feet, unlike classic Flying Kicks. All these realistic maneuvers, coming from Karate, Krav Maga, Kung Fu, TaeKwonDo, MMA, Capoeira, Muay Thai and more, are described with applications and training tips. Over 1000 Photos and Illustrations.


SACRIFICE KICKS
Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Realistic Airborne Attacks
Flying, Hopping, Jumping and Suicide Kicks
from Karate, Kung Fu, Krav Maga, Tae Kwon Do, MMA, Muay Thai, Capoeira and more
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 6
by Marc De Bremaeker


THE
ISOPLEX
METHOD
MUSCULATION PROGRAM FOR AN AESTHETIC AND TRULY ATLETHIC BODY
• Time Tested
• Minimal Equipment
• Suitable for All
ISOMETRICS
PLYOMETRICS
FLEXIOMETRICS
by Marc De Bremaeker

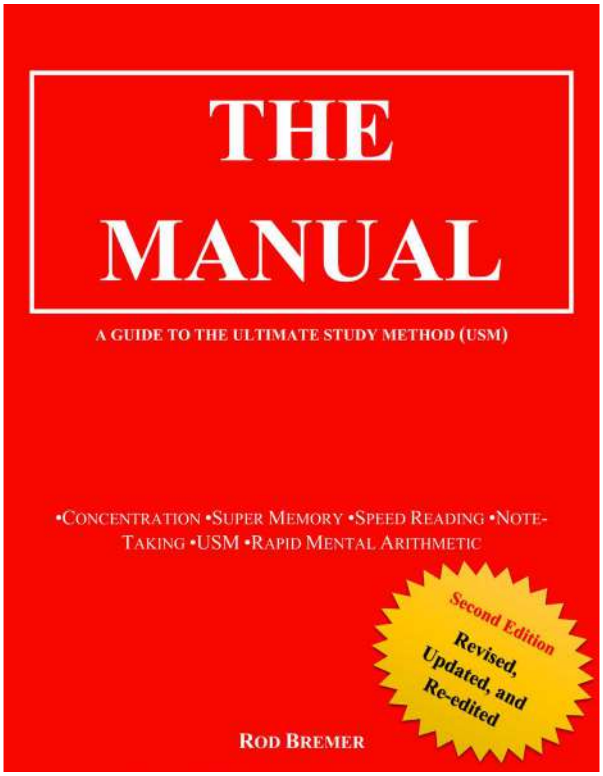
Isoplex stands for Isometrics, Plyometrics and Flexiometrics. The well-organized combination of these three training methods will give the serious trainee the most effective path possible to powerful and aesthetic muscles, in a minimum of time. The method is simply the optimal combination of those three basic tenets of fitness training. It is suitable for men and women. It is suitable for beginners, for athletes of all types, and even for bodybuilders. It is designed to build an aesthetic physique which is also conducive to sport performance and to personal health. ISOPLEX is in fact the modern and more scientific version of the training ideals of Greco-Roman Antiquity. As illustrated by many well-known antique sculptures, the athletes of old had aesthetic bodies based on core musculature and long, well-defined and necessarily efficient muscles. These synergistic training principles are and were universal. They were to be found in ancient Asian Martial Arts and in Body Cultures like Yoga, Chi Kung and many others. A truly athletic and functional body needed for realistic fighting was achieved by a mixture of Isometric exercises, intensive flexibility training and dynamic (Plyometric) drills. Martial Artists and Yogis will immediately grasp the connection. This is the way to train the body for effective and natural aesthetics, and that is what Isoplex concentrates on through an optimal and synergistic time-saving program.
With hundreds of Photos and Drawings and detailing Five complete weekly Programs for all levels.

Joint Kicks are probably the most effective way to neutralize an assailant in real-life situations. By attacking the opponent's articulations you ensure that they will not be able to keep on the fight; they will not be able to punch you with a damaged arm and they will not be able to run after you with a busted leg. Joint Kicks are basically regular kicks to be delivered towards specific targets and with the focused intention to cause damage. This is Martial arts in their purest sense and not sport techniques. In real life, you could easily encounter an assailant with a high resistance to pain. It could the high adrenalin levels, alcohol intoxication or drugs. But it will be very different from free-fighting in the dojo. If he is impervious to the pain of your blows, only by destroying the attacker's infrastructure will you be able to overcome him. The book reflects on the mindset behind Joint Kicks and presents numerous examples of their use. With over 800 Photos and Drawings.


JOINT KICKS
Destruction of the Opponent's Limbs
Take away an Attacker's Ability to Strike and to Move Even if he is Pain-resistant
The 'Kicks' Series, Volume 8
by Marc De Bremaeker

OTHER GENRES FROM FONS SAPIENTIAE

AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK AND KINDLE FORMATS ON AMAZON


THE MANUAL
A GUIDE TO THE ULTIMATE STUDY METHOD (USM)
•CONCENTRATION •SUPER MEMORY •SPEED READING •NOTE-TAKING •USM •RAPID MENTAL ARITHMETIC
Second Edition
Revised, Updated, and Re-edited
ROD BREMER

The Manual is the definitive guide to Enhanced Concentration, Super Memory, Speed Reading, Note-Taking, Rapid Mental Arithmetic, and the *Ultimate Study Method* (USM).
The techniques presented are the culmination of decades of practical experience combined with the latest scientific research and time-tested practices. The system described herewith will allow the practitioner to:

- Read faster with higher comprehension.
- Remember any type of information instantly.
- Store information in long-term memory.
- Enhance concentration and focus.
- Access deeper levels of the mind.
- Induce relaxation.
- Rapidly perform complex mental arithmetic.
- Master the Ultimate Study Method (USM).

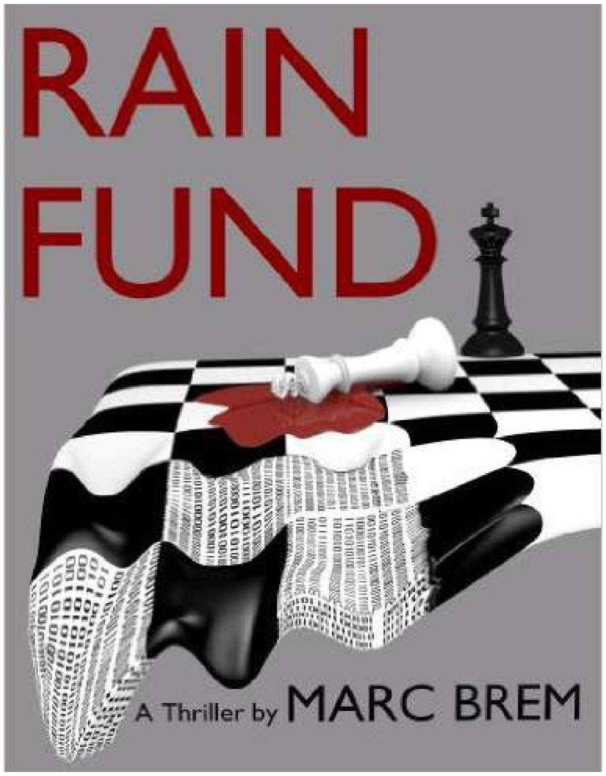
USM is a synergistic combination of established techniques for Concentration, Long-Term Memory, Speed Reading, and Note-Taking. It involves a systematic procedure that allows the practitioner to study any topic fast, efficiently and effectively. USM can be applied to all areas of educational study, academic research, business endeavours, as well as professional life in general.

Rain Fund: A riveting thriller

"...For the safety of the readers, this book ought to come with the disclaimer: leave this book read half-way at your own risk. Unless you are Superman, you won't be able to concentrate on much else until you have read the last page of "Rain Fund". The time has come for Patterson, Ludlum, Dan Brown et al to slide over and make space at the top for Marc Brem." - Shweta Shankar for Readers' Favorite

"...In the good tradition of Ludlum and Grisham. Five Stars" Aldo Levy

"Autistic geniuses charting financial markets; Mobster-fuelled Ponzi schemes; sophisticated hardware viruses; spies; and a rising superpower that strives for dominance – so realistic it is frightening."


RAIN FUND
A Thriller by MARC BREM